









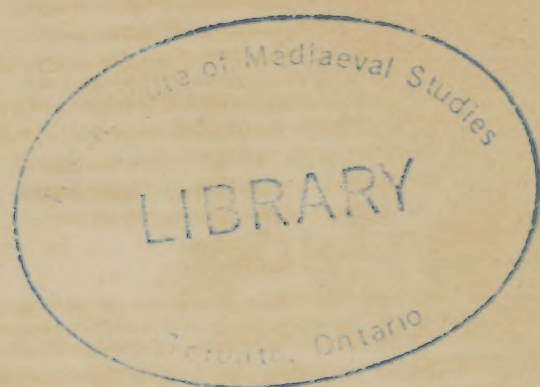


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A HISTORY OF PENANCE





# A HISTORY OF PENANCE

BEING A STUDY OF THE AUTHORITIES

(A) *For the whole Church to A.D. 450*

(B) *For the Western Church from A.D. 450 to A.D. 1215*

BY

OSCAR D. WATKINS, M.A.

VICAR OF S. CROSS, HOLYWELL, OXFORD

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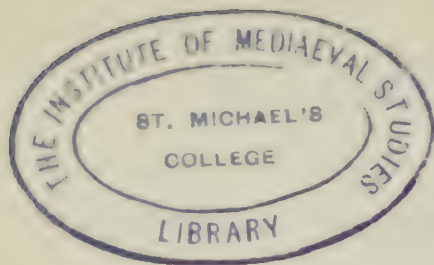
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## PREFACE

THESE studies have occupied the writer in his available time for a good many years. They should explain themselves. They are a succession of studies of the primary authorities on the Penance of the Christian Church. Together the writer has ventured to call them *A History of Penance*.

For those who use them some suggestions may be offered. (1) Mature theological students will read them as they please. (2) Students who are not yet familiar with the first two Christian centuries may do well to begin with the chapter headed *The Decian Persecution*. (3) Readers who are not students of theology, but who wish to see the results of these studies, will find what they want in the two review chapters, the ninth and the fifteenth.

The writer has hoped to distinguish by the use of a capital *P* the employment of the word *Penance* for the institution or sacrament from other employments of the word, as that for penalty. It is not an altogether easy distinction: and it may be that it has not been made very well.

OSCAR D. WATKINS.



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Novatian encouraged the penance of the lapsed, while withholding reconciliation upon earth.

[The later Novatianism of the West admitted no penance for capital sins.]

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Date c. A.D. 257-258. Author possibly Xystus (Sixtus) II.

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<p>The date A.D. 252 may be taken to mark the transition from rigorism to concession.</p> <p>In A.D. 251 councils had been held at Carthage and at Rome : in A.D. 252 at Carthage and at Antioch.</p> <p>Importance of this dramatic change of attitude.</p> <p>From A.D. 252 absolution accorded.</p> <p>Yet diverse opinions still. Novatianism. Illiberris. Marcellus and Eusebius.</p> <p>In the present chapter will be considered</p> <p>(a) S. Gregory Thaumaturgus, and the beginnings of the penitential grades;</p> <p>(b) The Syriac <i>Didascalia Apostolorum</i> (source of <i>Apostolic Constitutions</i>, i-vi).</p>	
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<p>S. Gregory Thaumaturgus, bishop of Neo-Cæsarea in Pontus from A.D. 233 to A.D. 270.</p> <p>A missionary diocese.</p> <p>The <i>Canonical Epistle</i> (c. A.D. 260).</p> <p>The five grades of penance enumerated in the eleventh chapter :—</p> <p>(1) The Mourning, (2) the Hearing, (3) the Falling, (4) the By-standing, (5) the Participation of the Hallowed.</p> <p>The Liturgy : (a) <i>missa catechumenorum</i>, and (b) <i>missa fidelium</i>.</p> <p>The part in the Liturgy permitted to each grade of penitent.</p> <p>The grades not invented by S. Gregory Thaumaturgus.</p> <p>Their original purpose not for penitents, but for catechumens.</p> <p>Development for penitents.</p> <p>References to the grades in the body of S. Gregory's epistle.</p> <p>S. Gregory's appeal is to (1) Holy Scripture, and (2) equity; not (3) to precedents, or (4) contemporary churches.</p> <p>The system of Neo-Cæsarea (ὁ ἐνθάδε τύπος).</p> <p>Detailed consideration of the epistle as regards its application of the grades of penance.</p> <p>Recapitulation of the grades, and of the place of each in the Liturgy.</p> <p>Balsamon assigns the outlining of the five grades to S. Gregory, but not the duration of the penances.</p>	
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<p>Of presumably Greek original : but only known in Syriac and Latin translations.</p> <p>The MSS.</p> <p>The <i>Didascalia</i> is the foundation of the first six books of the <i>Apostolic Constitutions</i>.</p> <p>It may probably be assigned to Syria in the third century.</p> <p>Some provincial town not far from Palestine, as in Cœlesyria or on the Arabian border.</p> <p>Date perhaps A.D. 252-270.</p> <p>Contents of the <i>Didascalia</i>.</p> <p>Position of the bishop. It is one of supremacy and control.</p> <p>He has power to forgive the sins of the fallen, for he fills the place of the Christ.</p> <p>Nowhere in Christian literature more forcible assertions of bishop's prerogative.</p> <p>The commission given to the office or order of the bishops.</p> <p>The bishop is a physician to heal the sick.</p> <p>It is his duty to cast out the disobedient.</p> <p>In due course he lays his hands to effect the reconciliation.</p> <p>Presbyters are mentioned.</p> <p>The <i>Didascalia</i> insists on the policy of compassion.</p> <p>The normal attitude of a Christian is that of the unfallen.</p>	



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And to the fallen the bishop's first duty is severity.  
 This involves a formal expulsion from the church building.  
 Without this justice not met.  
 Next comes the place of mercy.  
 In this the bishop will meet with opposition from persons within the Church.  
 This gives an approximate indication of date (A.D. 252-270).  
 The bishop, following GOD, is to call sinners to repentance.  
 The scope of his mercy is not limited by any gravity of sin.  
 The procedure in the *Didascalia* :—(1) Expulsion of the penitent,  
 (2) Supplication of the faithful, (3) Examination by the bishop,  
 (4) Assignment of the penance with reproof and exhortation,  
 (5) Fulfilment of the penance, (6) Solemn reconciliation.  
 The impenitent to be cast out of the Church.  
 Only one reconciliation. A second casting out is final.  
 This provision first found in the *Shepherd of Hermas*. It is more persistent in the West than in the East.  
 Analogy of penitents and catechumens.  
 They share the *missa catechumenorum*.  
 The faithful not to avoid, but to encourage, the penitents.  
 The laying on of hands is analogous to Baptism.  
 In Syria the graded system is not elaborated.  
 No distinction of Hearers and Fallers. No Bystanders.  
 The graded system never at any time prevalent in Syria.  
 The bishop's court. His responsibility.  
 Those cast out are not to share with the Church in prayers or in offerings.  
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 Examples of this relationship.  
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 The *Damasine epitaphs* of Marcellus and Eusebius.  
 These two popes required the discipline of the lapsed.  
 Bitter opposition, resulting in riot and bloodshed. This followed by the intervention of the "tyrant" Maxentius.  
 The *Liber Pontificalis*.  
 Marcellus institutes twenty-five priests of *titles*.  
 These would hear confessions, and assign penances,  
 But in Rome the bishop reconciled.

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*Council of Illiberris*.  
 Difficulties of date. Perhaps about A.D. 306.  
*Illiberris* a Spanish council, but representative of the peninsula.  
 Stern disciplinary system of the council.  
 Spain has not budged since pre-Decian days.  
 Apostates who have rendered idol worship not to be reconciled even at death (c. 1).  
 Canons affecting Christians who have served as *flamines* (cc. 2, 3).  
 Homicide of a slave woman by her mistress only moderately punished (c. 5).

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Homicide by <i>maleficium</i> does not admit communion at death (c. 6).	
For adultery one penance of fixed duration : in cases of relapse communion refused at death (c. 7).	
Other instances of rigorism (cc. 8, 10, 12, 13, 17, 19).	
Letters of <i>confessors</i> to be superseded by letters of communion (c. 25).	
Men who have been impure in their adolescence may after marriage be admitted to communion, when due penance has been done (c. 31).	
Case of persons who under persecution drop out of Christian adherence (cc. 45, 46).	
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Penance and reconciliation admitted.	
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Case of Christian slaves sent to sacrifice by Christian masters.	
Lapsed persons, who have confessed their Lord on a later occasion, are received in communion.	
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The growing severity to be noted.	
The phrase <i>according to the defined grades</i> .	
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Sins of desire not visited with penance in the public system of the Church.	
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The *Council of Nicæa* (A.D. 325).  
 Nicæa in Bithynia, a neighbouring province of Galatia and Pontus,  
 and so in touch with the graded system.  
 Provisions for the reconciliation of the Cathari (Novatianists).  
 No lapsed persons to be found among the officiant clergy.  
 Three canons refer to the graded system as an established institution.  
 They concern the lapsed faithful, persons who have undertaken  
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 What is the significance of these references to the graded system in  
 the great general council of Nicæa?  
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 Yet it fails to become established in the great centres of Church life.  
 Canon 13 rules that for all capital sins the reconciliation of the  
 offender is open before death.  
 This is the final summing up of the great conflict following the  
 Decian persecution.  
*Résumé* of the chapter.

## VII. FROM A.D. 350 TO A.D. 450

### I. THE EASTERN CHURCHES

1. PROVINCES OF ASIA MINOR.
2. ANTIOCH.
3. CONSTANTINOPLE.
4. ALEXANDRIA.

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This period will record  
 In the provinces of Asia the system of graded penance,  
 But in the great centres no such system.  
 The general tendency is to relax discipline,  
 But in the West some measure of discipline is retained.  
 Also in the West a growth of rigorism towards the technical penitent.

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His *canons* record the customary discipline (A.D. 374-375).

Instances :—

Trigamists five years.  
 Murder, adultery, unnatural sin, thirty years.  
 Homicide (manslaughter) eleven years.  
 Fornication four years.  
 Forcible abduction three years.  
 Clerks to be degraded.  
 Adulteresses not to be exposed (no public confession).  
 Wilful murder twenty years. (First instance of reception at  
 any time but death.)  
 Other instances.

How far were these regulations operative?

Basil's rule that one cognisant of another's offence should be  
 liable to the same penance if he did not report it.  
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It takes shape in the hands of S. Gregory Thaumaturgus.	
It extends from Pontus to Cappadocia, Galatia, Bithynia.	
It is accepted and formulated by the Council of Ancyra and Neo-Cæsarea.	
It finds recognition in some of the canons of Nicæa.	
It is extended and elaborated by S. Basil the Great and S. Gregory of Nyssa.	
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Letters <i>Ad Theodorum lapsum</i> (A.D. 372). Capital sins not outside God's mercy. Penitence to be judged not by time, but by temper.	
These letters written before the three <i>Canonical Letters</i> of S. Basil (A.D. 374-375).	
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<i>Homilies against the Anomæans</i> .	
"Intolerable publication" in a "theatre of fellow-servants" not required. This a repudiation of the practice of the Asian provinces. Chrysostom cannot be certainly understood to say that <i>confession</i> had been public, or that confession was not now to be made to a priest. But his teaching is all in the direction of greater liberty for the penitent. Alternative modes of forgiveness. No confession <i>necessary</i> to forgiveness.	
<i>De Lazaro</i> .	
Excellency of exomologesis. Publicity "in the midst of the theatre" not required.	
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<i>Concerning the Statues</i> .	
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(1) Self-accusation, (2) forgiveness of others, (3) prayer, (4) almsgiving, (5) humility.	
(b) <i>De Pœnitentia</i> .	
(1) Confession, (2) contrition, (3) humility, (4) almsgiving.	
(c) <i>Homily 28 on S. John</i> : "Various ways."	
(d) <i>Homily 4 on 2 Corinthians</i> (A.D. 392).	
A contrite and humbled heart "is exomologesis, is μετανοία."	
"Medicaments" : "(1) humility; (2) exomologesis; (3) the avoidance of detraction; (4) thanksgiving in adversity; (5) charity by substance and by acts; (6) constant prayer."	
No one mode indispensable, but a recommendation to apply all continuously.	
(e) <i>Homily 6 on Hebrews</i> (at Constantinople) :—	
(1) Condemnation of fault; (2) humility [with confession]; (3) prayer; (4) almsgiving; (5) forgiveness of others; (6) conversion of the brethren; (7) recourse without reserve to the priests; (8) caring for the oppressed; (9) avoidance of anger, and meekness of endurance.	
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The existence of a priest penitentiary at Constantinople.	
Before the Decian persecution bishops had administered Penance.	
After it a special priest appointed.	
The penitent made a confession to the priest penitentiary.	
According to Socrates the penance was ἐπὶ τοῦτου τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου,	
“in the hands of ” or “under the guidance of this priest.”	
The exomologesis certainly included a confession, and that a private	
confession to the priest.	
The office had been in use in many churches from about A.D. 252,	
and must have been copied by the church of Constantinople.	
Not found in the same way at Rome or Antioch.	
Meaning of τῷ ἐκκλησιαστικῷ κανόνι, <i>the ecclesiastical rule</i> .	
The office had been designed to avoid publicity in face of the	
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Why did Nectarius abolish the office of penitentiary ?	
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Hostile criticism of Chrysostom's wide liberty of penitence.	
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## VIII. FROM A.D. 350 TO A.D. 450

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PART A

THE HISTORY OF PENANCE IN THE  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH TO A.D. 450





# 1. THE APOSTOLIC PERIOD

## TEXT OF AUTHORITIES

**The Books of the New Testament.**

**[The Story of S. John and the robber in]  
S. Clement of Alexandria.**

**The Books of the New Testament.**

*[The commission to the Apostles to remit and to retain sins.]*

**S. John xx. 21-23 :—**

Εἶπεν οὖν αὐτοῖς πάλιν· εἰρήνη ὑμῖν· καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ, κγὼ ἄπέμπω ὑμᾶς. καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον. ἃν τινων ἀφήτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας, ἀφένονται αὐτοῖς· ἃν τινων κρατῆτε, κεκράτηνται.

*[The promise to the disciples that whatsoever they should bind or loose on earth should be (things) bound or loosed in heaven.]*

**S. Matthew xviii. 18 :—**

Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅσα ἂν δήσητε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται δεδεμένα ἐν οὐρανῷ, καὶ ὅσα ἂν λύσητε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται λελυμένα ἐν οὐρανῷ.

*[The promise to Peter that whatsoever he should bind or loose on earth should be (a thing) bound or loosed in heaven.]*

**S. Matthew xvi. 18-19 :—**

Κἀγὼ δέ σοι λέγω ὅτι σὺ εἰ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ πύλαι ᾗδου οὐ κατασχύσουσιν αὐτῆς. δώσω σοι τὰς κλεῖδας τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν, καὶ ὃ ἂν δήσης ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται δεδεμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, καὶ ὃ ἂν λύσης ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται λελυμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

*[The Unpardonable Sin.]*

**S. Matthew xii. 31, 32 :—**

διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν πᾶσα ἁμαρτία καὶ βλασφημία ἀφεθήσεται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις· ἡ δὲ τοῦ πνεύματος βλασφημία οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται. καὶ ὃς ἂν εἴπῃ λόγον κατὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ· ὃς δ' ἂν εἴπῃ κατὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος τοῦ Ἁγίου, οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ οὔτε ἐν τούτῳ τῷ αἰῶνι οὔτε ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι.

## The Books of the New Testament.

[*The Unpardonable Sin.*]

*S. Mark* iii. 28-30 :—

ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅτι πάντα ἀφεθήσεται τοῖς υἱοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὰ ἁμαρτήματα, καὶ αἱ βλασφημίαι ὅσα ἂν βλασφημήσωσιν· ὅς δ' ἂν βλασφημήσῃ εἰς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον, οὐκ ἔχει ἄφεσιν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἀλλ' ἔνοχος ἐστὶν αἰωνίου ἁμαρτήματος. ὅτι ἔλεγον, Πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον ἔχει.

[*Texts of the Apostolic Decree.*]

*The Apostolic Decree.* [Prof. D. W. Sanday, *The Apostolic Decree*, Leipzig, 1908.]

(*The Eastern and Western Texts as broadly given by Prof. Sanday.*)

*Eastern text* :—

*Acts* xv. 20. ἐπιστεῖλαι αὐτοῖς τοῦ ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν ἀλισγημάτων τῶν εἰδώλων καὶ τῆς πορνείας καὶ πνικτοῦ καὶ τοῦ αἵματος.

*Acts* xv. 29. ἀπέχεσθαι εἰδωλοθύτων καὶ αἵματος καὶ πνικτῶν καὶ πορνείας, ἐξ ὧν διατηροῦντες ἑαυτοὺς εὖ πράξετε. Ἔρρωσθε.

*Acts* xxi. 25. φυλάσσεσθαι αὐτοὺς τό τε εἰδωλόθυτον καὶ αἷμα καὶ πνικτὸν καὶ πορνείαν.

*Western text* :—

*Acts* xv. 20. ἐπιστεῖλαι αὐτοῖς τοῦ ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν ἀλισγημάτων τῶν εἰδώλων καὶ τῆς πορνείας (*om.* καὶ πνικτοῦ) καὶ τοῦ αἵματος, καὶ ὅσα μὴ θέλουσιν ἑαυτοῖς γίνεσθαι ἑτέροις μὴ ποιεῖν (*the Golden Rule*).

*Acts* xv. 29. ἀπέχεσθαι εἰδωλοθύτων καὶ αἵματος (*om.* καὶ πνικτῶν) καὶ πορνείας, καὶ ὅσα μὴ θέλετε ἑαυτοῖς γίνεσθαι ἑτέρῳ μὴ ποιεῖν (*the Golden Rule*), ἀφ' ὧν διατηροῦντες ἑαυτοὺς εὖ πράξετε, φερόμενοι ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι. ἔρρωσθε.

*Acts* xxi. 25. φυλάσσεσθαι αὐτοὺς τό τε εἰδωλόθυτον καὶ αἷμα (*om.* καὶ πνικτὸν) καὶ πορνείαν.

[*Sins unto death, and sins not unto death.*]

1 *John* v. 16 :—

ἐάν τις ἴδῃ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτάνοντα ἁμαρτίαν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον, αἰτήσῃ, καὶ δώσῃ αὐτῷ ζωὴν τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσι μὴ πρὸς θάνατον. ἐστὶν ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον· οὐ περὶ ἐκείνης λέγω ἵνα ἐρωτήσῃ. πᾶσα ἀδικία ἁμαρτία ἐστὶ· καὶ ἔστιν ἁμαρτία οὐ πρὸς θάνατον.

[*Impossible to restore an apostate.*]

*Hebrews* vi. 4-8 :—

Ἀδύνατον γὰρ τοὺς ἅπαξ φωτισθέντας, γευσάμενους τε τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς ἐπουρανίου, καὶ μετόχους γεννηθέντας Πνεύματος ἁγίου, καὶ καλὸν γευσάμενους Θεοῦ ῥῆμα δυνάμεις τε μέλλοντος αἰῶνος καὶ παραπεσόντας πάλιν ἀνακαινίζειν εἰς μετάνοιαν, ἀνασταυροῦντας ἑαυτοῖς τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ παραδειγματί-



**The Books of the New Testament.**

ζοντας γῇ γὰρ ἡ πιούσα τὸν ἐπ' αὐτῆς ἐρχόμενον πολλάκις ὑετόν, καὶ τίκτουσα βοτάνην εὐθετον ἐκείνοις δι' οὓς καὶ γεωργεῖται, μεταλαμβάνει εὐλογίας ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ· ἐκφέρουσα δὲ ἀκάνθας καὶ τριβόλους ἀδόκιμος καὶ κατάρας ἐγγύς, ἥς τὸ τέλος εἰς καῦσιν.

[For the apostate there only remains the Divine judgment.]

**Hebrews x. 26–31 :—**

Ἐκουσίως γὰρ ἁμαρτανόντων ἡμῶν μετὰ τὸ λαβεῖν τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τῆς ἀληθείας, οὐκ ἔτι περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἀπολείπεται θυσία, φοβερὰ δέ τις ἐκδοχὴ κρίσεως καὶ πυρὸς ζῆλος ἐσθίειν μέλλοντος τοὺς ὑπεναντίους.

Ἀθετήσας τις νόμον Μωϋσέως χωρὶς οἰκτιρμῶν ἐπὶ δυσὶν ἢ τρισὶ μάρτυσιν ἀποθνήσκει· πόσῳ δοκεῖτε χείρονος ἀξιωθήσεται τιμωρίας ὁ τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ καταπατήσας, καὶ τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης κοινὸν ἡγησάμενος ἐν ᾧ ἡγιασθη, καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος ἐνυβρίσας; οἶδαμεν γὰρ τὸν εἰπόντα, Ἐμοὶ ἐκδίκησις, ἐγὼ ἀνταποδώσω, λέγει κύριος· καὶ πάλιν, κρινεῖ κύριος τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ· φοβερὸν τὸ ἐμπεσεῖν εἰς χεῖρας Θεοῦ ζῶντος.

[A fornicator, or profane person as Esau, must expect rejection.]

**Hebrews xii. 14–17 :—**

Εἰρήνην διώκετε μετὰ πάντων, καὶ τὸν ἁγιασμὸν οὐ χωρὶς οὐδεὶς ὀψεται τὸν κύριον· ἐπισκοποῦντες μή τις ὑστερῶν ἀπὸ τῆς χάριτος τοῦ Θεοῦ, μή τις ῥίζα πικρίας ἄνω φύουσα ἐνοχλῇ, καὶ διὰ ταύτης μιανθῶσιν οἱ πολλοί, μή τις πόρνος ἢ βέβηλος, ὡς Ἡσαῦ, ὃς ἀντὶ βρώσεως μιᾶς ἀπέδοτο τὰ πρωτοτόκια ἑαυτοῦ. ἵστε γὰρ ὅτι καὶ μετέπειτα θέλων κληρονομῆσαι τὴν εὐλογίαν ἀπεδοκιμάσθη (μετανοίας γὰρ τόπον οὐχ εὔρε), καίπερ μετὰ δακρύων ἐκζητήσας αὐτήν.

[Casting forth of the incestuous Corinthian.]

**1 Corinthians v. 3–5 :—**

ἐγὼ μὲν γάρ, ἀπὼν τῷ σώματι παρὼν δὲ τῷ πνεύματι, ἤδη κέκρικα ὡς παρών, τὸν οὕτω τοῦτο κατεργασάμενον, ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ, συναχθέντων ὑμῶν καὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ πνεύματος σὺν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ, παραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ Σατανᾷ εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός, ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῇ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ.

[S. Paul, ratifying the action of the Corinthian church, reconciles an offender in the person of Christ (perhaps the incestuous man, perhaps not).]

**2 Corinthians ii. 6–11 :—**

ἰκανὸν τῷ τοιούτῳ ἡ ἐπιτιμία αὕτη ἡ ὑπὸ τῶν πλειόνων, ὥστε τοῦναντίον μᾶλλον ὑμᾶς χαρίσασθαι καὶ παρακαλέσαι, μή πως τῇ περισσοτέρᾳ λύπῃ καταποθῇ ὁ τοιοῦτος. διὸ παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς κυρῶσαι εἰς αὐτὸν ἀγάπην· εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ ἔγραψα, ἵνα γνῶ τὴν δοκιμὴν ὑμῶν, εἰ εἰς πάντα ὑπήκοοί ἐστε. ᾧ δέ τι χαρίζεσθε, κἀγὼ καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ὁ κεχάρισμαι, εἴ τι κεχάρισμαι, δι' ὑμᾶς

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ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα μὴ πλεονεκτηθῶμεν ὑπὸ τοῦ Σατανᾶ· οὐ γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὰ νοήματα ἀγνοοῦμεν.

[*S. Paul delivers Hymenæus and Alexander unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.*]

#### 1 Timothy i. 18–20 :—

Ταύτην τὴν παραγγελίαν παρατίθεμαί σοι, τέκνον Τιμόθεε, κατὰ τὰς προαγούσας ἐπὶ σέ προφητείας, ἵνα στρατεύῃ ἐν αὐταῖς τὴν καλὴν στρατείαν ἔχων πίστιν καὶ ἀγαθὴν συνείδησιν, ἣν τινες ἀπώσάμενοι περὶ τὴν πίστιν ἐνανάγησαν· ὧν ἐστὶν Ὑμέναιος καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος, οὓς παρέδωκα τῷ Σατανᾷ, ἵνα παιδευθῶσι μὴ βλασφημεῖν.

[*Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. (Attitude of Christians towards Hymenæus and Philetus after excommunication.)*]

#### 2 Timothy ii. 19 :—

ὁ μέντοι στερεὸς θεμέλιος τοῦ Θεοῦ ἔστηκεν, ἔχων τὴν σφραγίδα ταύτην, Ἔγνων Κύριος τοὺς ὄντας αὐτοῦ, καὶ Ἀποστήτω ἀπὸ ἀδικίας πᾶς ὁ ὀνομάζων τὸ ὄνομα Κυρίου.

[*The church of the Ephesians will on repentance be forgiven for forsaking her first love : otherwise not.*]

#### Revelation ii. 4, 5 :—

ἀλλὰ ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὅτι τὴν ἀγάπην σου τὴν πρώτην ἀφῆκες. μνημόνευε οὖν πόθεν πέπτωκες, καὶ μετανόησον καὶ τὰ πρῶτα ἔργα ποιήσον· εἰ δὲ μὴ, ἔρχομαί σοι καὶ κινήσω τὴν λυχνίαν σου ἐκ τοῦ τόπου αὐτῆς, ἐὰν μὴ μετανόησῃς.

[*In the church of Pergamum are persons who eat things sacrificed to idols, and who commit fornication. Also some who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. Repentance called for.*]

#### Revelation ii. 14–16 :—

ἀλλ' ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὀλίγα, ὅτι ἔχεις ἐκεῖ κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν Βαλαάμ, ὃς ἐδίδασκεν τῷ Βαλὰκ βαλεῖν σκάνδαλον ἐνώπιον τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ, φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυτα καὶ πορνεῦσαι. οὕτως ἔχεις καὶ σὺ κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν τῶν Νικολαϊτῶν ὁμοίως. μετανόησον οὖν· εἰ δὲ μὴ, ἔρχομαι σοι ταχὺ καὶ πολεμήσω μετ' αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ ῥομφαίᾳ τοῦ στόματός μου.

[*Jezebel seduces Thyatirene Christians (a) to commit fornication, (b) to eat things sacrificed to idols. For these mortal sins Jezebel had been given time to repent. Her associates will suffer unless they repent.*]

#### Revelation ii. 20–23 :—

ἀλλὰ ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὅτι ἀφεῖς τὴν γυναῖκα Ἰεζάβελ, ἡ λέγουσα ἑαυτὴν προφήτιν, καὶ διδάσκει καὶ πλανᾷ τοὺς ἐμους δούλους πορνεῦσαι καὶ φαγεῖν

**The Books of the New Testament.**

εἰδωλόθῃτα· καὶ ἔδωκα αὐτῇ χρόνον ἵνα μετανοήσῃ, καὶ οὐ θέλει μετανοῆσαι ἐκ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς. ἰδοὺ βάλλω αὐτὴν εἰς κλίνην, καὶ τοὺς μοιχεύοντας μετ' αὐτῆς εἰς θλίψιν μεγάλην, ἐὰν μὴ μετανοήσουσιν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῆς· καὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς ἀποκτενῶ ἐν θανάτῳ.

**Story of S. John and the robber.**

[*A homicide admitted to reconciliation.*]

**S. Clemens Alexandrinus.** [Migne, *P. G.*, IX. 649.]

*Quis dives salvetur*, c. 42 :—

Προσελθόντα δὲ τὸν γέροντα, περιέλαβεν ἀπολογούμενος ταῖς οἰμωγαῖς ὡς ἐδύνατο, καὶ τοῖς δάκρυσιν βαπτιζόμενος ἐκ δευτέρου, μόνην ἀποκρίπτων τὴν δεξιάν. Ὁ δὲ ἐγγνώμενος, ἐπομνύμενος, ὡς ἄφεςιν αὐτῷ παρὰ τοῦ Σωτῆρος εὐρηται, δεόμενος, γονυπετῶν, αὐτὴν τὴν δεξιάν ὡς ὑπὸ τῆς μετανοίας κεκαθαρμένην καταφιλῶν, ἐπὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἐπανήγαγε. Καὶ δαψιλέσι μὲν εὐχαῖς ἐξαιτούμενος, συνεχέσι δὲ νηστεύσας συναγωνιζόμενος, ποικίλαις δὲ ῥήσεσι λόγων κατεπάδων αὐτοῦ τὴν γνώμην, οὐ πρότερον ἀπῆλθεν, ὥς φασι, πρὶν αὐτὸν κατέστησε τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ, διδοὺς μέγα παράδειγμα μετανοίας ἀληθινῆς καὶ μέγα γνώρισμα παλιγγενείας, τρόπαιον ἀναστάσεως ἐλπίζομένης, ὅταν ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος οἱ ἄγγελοι τοὺς ἀληθῶς μετανοοῦντας δέξωνται εἰς ἐπουρανίους σκηνάς, φαιδρῶς γεγηθότες, ὑμνοῦντες, ἀνοιγνύντες, τοὺς οὐρανούς. . . .



## THE APOSTOLIC PERIOD

### 1. *The Authority to remit and to retain sins ; to loose and to bind.*

(a) S. John xx. 19-23.

(b) S. Matthew xviii. 15-18.

(c) S. Matthew xvi. 18-19.

(a) Our  
Lord's Com-  
mission.

The narra-  
tive in S.  
John.

THE commission on which the whole penitential system of the Church ultimately rests is the commission of our Lord Jesus Christ to the Apostles to remit and to retain sins.<sup>1</sup> This commission is narrated in S. John's Gospel to have been formally and authoritatively given by our Lord on the very day of His Resurrection in the evening "when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews." The Lord came and stood in the midst of them. Ten of the twelve who were called to apostolic office were present. Judas had passed to his own place. Thomas was absent. To the ten our Lord said : "*Peace be unto you.* And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, *Peace be unto you : as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.* And when he had said this He breathed on them, and saith unto them, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost : whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*"

Act and  
words de-  
signed to  
convey a  
power.

It would seem that no act could have been more definitely designed to convey a power. The Lord breathed upon them by a formal act. He used the formal words *λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον*, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost*. Some have rendered *Receive ye a holy breath*. And then He specified in words the character and scope of the spiritual power which He thus formally conveyed. It was a power to remit and a power to retain sins. It extended to the sins of whomsoever.

Here then is the historic commission narrated with circumstance as occurring at a point of time. With it should be com-

<sup>1</sup> The administration of Penance in history is based upon our Lord's commission as accepted by the Church. The passage S. John xx. 19-23 is adduced here as being the accepted expression of this commission. The other two passages are similarly adduced as being the accepted record of utterances of our Lord.

pared the teaching of the discourse recorded in Matt. xviii., and the promise to S. Peter in Matt. xvi. In the discourse in Matt. xviii. our Lord gives instructions as to the method of dealing with a brother who has fallen into a trespass. "If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven (*ἔσται δεδεμένα, shall be things bound*): and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (*ἔσται λελυμένα, shall be things loosed*)." This discourse is placed in the Gospel according to S. Matthew shortly after the narrative of the Transfiguration; it is addressed to "the disciples"; it is in the future tense throughout—"shall bind," "shall loose," "shall be (things) bound," "shall be (things) loosed"; it immediately follows on an instruction to exclude from Church fellowship; and the statement is distinctly made in a form of words which indicate that the prior or initiative act is the binding or loosing upon earth, while the binding or loosing in heaven is a following, accepting, or confirming of the act on earth. The words are hardly patient of the view that the binding or loosing on earth is only the official declaration of what has already found place in heaven.

The promise to S. Peter is made in a somewhat similar form of words, "And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth shall be bound in heaven (*ἔσται δεδεμένον, shall be a thing bound*); and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (*ἔσται λελυμένον, shall be a thing loosed*)." It is unnecessary here to enter upon the Petrine controversy. It is sufficient to note that our Lord promises to S. Peter in whatsoever capacity that in the future he will exercise powers of binding and of loosing which will be ratified in heaven.

The three passages should be read together. The promise to the disciples in Matt. xviii. and the promise to S. Peter in Matt. xvi. both indicate as future the prerogative of binding and loosing. Both passages again are alike in indicating that a special prerogative of binding and loosing is to be exercised by those to whom it is promised. The direct commission in S. John xx. records the actual conveyance of such authority as a historical fact, the remitting or retaining of sins being empowered in the present tense, and without mention of the binding or loosing in heaven. There is indeed a distinct difference of meaning between the expression employed in the actual empowerment, the remitting and retaining of sins, and that employed in the other two passages, the binding and loosing of the sinner. The two forms of expression state different aspects of the same act. The *binding and loosing* are rather concerned with Church order: the offender

(b) The discourse in Matt. xviii.

(c) The promise to S. Peter in Matt. xvi.

Comparison of the three passages.



is excluded from or admitted to the communion of the Church in this present life; and this ordering is to find present acceptance or ratification in heaven. It may be understood that the heavenly acceptance of loosing by the ministers of the Church is subject to the existence in the persons of the necessary dispositions of penitence and faith, and that the acceptance of the binding by the ministers of the Church has also its conditions in the persons. The *remitting or retaining of sins* seems to be rather concerned with the sinfulness or guilt of sins and the Divine reconciliation. This reconciliation God is prepared to accord on the pronouncement of His minister; again subject to the presence in the persons of the necessary dispositions of penitence and faith. No less is He prepared to withhold this reconciliation if His minister withhold it. Here again the dispositions in the person must accord.

It may perhaps be stated with advantage here that the evidence of Church history in the early centuries will be found to show that the exercise of this commission was understood as having present efficacy, but not as foreclosing the final judgment of the Divine Judge. Also, that during the time of penance undergone by a sinner admitted to penance the person was regarded as not indeed yet reconciled, but as having the favourable regard of the Highest, Who while for the present binding him, might be looked to for his loosing in due time.

## 2. *The Unpardonable Sin* (Matt. xii. 31, 32; Mark iii. 28-30).

There is a  
sin to which  
God does  
not accord  
forgiveness.

The teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospels includes the teaching that a particular sin is beyond the reach of pardon. The statements in the passages cited are very definite. There is a sin to which it does not please God to accord forgiveness either here or hereafter. It is a sin of spiritual wickedness; the sin of blasphemy against the Spirit. It is a sin which finds expression in an unholy attitude of irreverence and defiance; a sin whose words are deadly.

In the present day when the clergy have to deal with penitent persons who are troubled by this teaching, they not unfrequently point out that the penitence of the persons is the best argument that they at least are not held by God as guilty of this sin, inasmuch as true penitence can only come from God's prompting, and this He gives not to those whose penitence He will not accept. But there is a sin to which God does not accord forgiveness.

This insisted  
on by the  
Novatian-  
ists.

For the purpose of this investigation the interest of the passages cited is much concerned with the fact that they were employed to justify the action of the great Novatianist schism.<sup>1</sup> This schism, commencing with the consecration of Novatian as a rival bishop of Rome or anti-pope in the year A.D. 251, spread rapidly among the Christian communities from Spain to Parthia,

<sup>1</sup> *Contra Novatianum* (Migne, P. L., XXXV. 2304).



and lasted in places even into the seventh century. Its strength undoubtedly lay in the fact that the rigorist attitude towards the apostate had been the recognised attitude of the Church for the century preceding the Decian persecution, and seemed to large numbers of Christians to be the only true standing on the ancient paths.

### 3. *The Apostolic Decree and the Three Capital Sins.*

In the early days of the Apostolic Church a burning question arose as to what observances were to be required of Gentile converts. In the Acts of the Apostles (xv. 6) it is recorded that "the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter." The gathering is frequently styled either the *Apostolic Council* or the *Council of Jerusalem*. The conclusion then arrived at was embodied in a canon or decree which is commonly referred to by German scholars as the *Aposteldekret*, and which may in English be similarly named the *Apostolic Decree*. It is to be found in Acts xv. 28, 29. Parallel passages are Acts xv. 20, in the speech of S. James proposing the decree, and Acts xxi. 25, where the elders of the church in Jerusalem cite the decree.

The decree is recorded in the manuscripts and in the early writers with important variations, the various readings reducing themselves to two groups with widely different meanings. One of these, characteristic of the Eastern text, makes of the decree a ceremonial regulation of diet, with a prohibition of fornication added. The other, found in the Western text, shows the decree as the prohibition of the three great offences of idolatry, fornication, and homicide. As a ceremonial regulation of diet the decree is found either

(a) with four items: (1) pollutions of idols, (2) fornication, (3) things strangled, (4) blood, or

(b) with three items: *things strangled* and *blood* being taken together or confused.

As a prohibition of great offences the decree is found with requirements as follows:—

*To abstain from pollutions of idols, and fornication, and blood, and as many things as men do not wish to be done to them by others.* (The Golden Rule sometimes omitted.)

For the purpose of the investigations of the present treatise the Apostolic Decree becomes of great importance if the second presentation is the true one: that is to say, if the decree prohibits the three great offences of idolatry, impurity, and bloodshed. For these three offences are the capital or mortal sins of the early centuries. It will be shown farther on that at the close of the second century the Christian communities tended to regard these three sins as beyond the scope of the absolution of the

Admission  
of capital  
offenders to  
reconcilia-  
tion only  
gradual.

Church in this present life; referring them to the Divine Judge at the last great day. It will be farther shown how one by one for each of these classes of sin the Church was led by urgent occasion to reclaim the prerogative of absolution even in this life which the Lord had committed to her exercise. First, by the decision of Callistus (c. A.D. 220) those guilty of sins of impurity, whether adultery, fornication, or other offences of the same class, were admitted to reconciliation after due penance performed. Next, after the Decian persecution (A.D. 250), the result of a long and vehement struggle was the absolution after penance of those guilty of apostasy and idolatrous practice. Last, and with no such clear note of time, the shedders of blood came within the scope of absolution. But these three great sins were to the early Christian community by eminence the capital or mortal sins. Other offences might be serious, and others again venial; but there were no offences to be placed in the same category with the three offences of idolatry, impurity, and bloodshed.

The evidence  
for the  
various  
readings.

In view of this historic development that presentation of the Apostolic Decree which shows it as prohibiting the three great capital sins becomes highly interesting. A detailed examination of all the evidence as to the original reading is not possible in the space here available, but those who wish to investigate the subject are referred to the careful and thorough monograph of Dr. Gotthold Resch, *Das Aposteldecret nach seiner ausserkanonischen Textgestalt untersucht* (Leipzig, 1905). Broadly speaking, the manuscripts of the Eastern text, which include most of the Greek uncials, express the prohibition of things strangled, and thus give to the decree a form which makes it a dietary regulation, and points to the prohibition of blood, and of εἰδωλόθυστα in the same sense. For the other form the evidence is Western. It includes some manuscripts, as *Codex D*: while the evidence of several early writers indicates that this form was in vogue in their day and environment. Thus Irenæus,<sup>1</sup> Tertullian,<sup>2</sup> Cyprian,<sup>3</sup> Pacian,<sup>4</sup> Augustine,<sup>5</sup> Jerome,<sup>6</sup> Fulgentius,<sup>7</sup> and the writer known as Ambrosiaster<sup>8</sup> all cite the decree in this form.

The two acceptations of the decree are obviously not compatible with each other. A choice has to be made between them. In making it considerations of reasonableness may well have their weight. Why, it may be asked, should the Apostles, in the very decree which relieves the Gentile convert of the prime ceremonial requirement of circumcision, go out of their way to require a minor ceremonial observance as to food? Why, if their object was to indicate the irreducible minimum of ceremonial observance,

<sup>1</sup> *Adv. Hæreses*, iii. 12, 14 (versio lat.).

<sup>3</sup> *Testimon. ad Quir.*, iii. 119.

<sup>5</sup> *Contra Faustum*, xxxii. 13.

<sup>7</sup> *Pro fide catholica* (P. L., LXV. 716).

<sup>2</sup> *De Pudicitia*, 12.

<sup>4</sup> *Parænesis*, c. 4.

<sup>6</sup> *In Gal.* v. 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Com. in Gal.* ii. 2.



did they add to their indication the mention of one moral offence, however great? This consideration led Bentley to suggest *πορκεία*, *pork*, as a more likely reading than *πορνεία*, *fornication*. Again, no one can more strongly condemn *pollutions of idols*, the idolatrous taint of what is actually forming part of an idolatrous sacrifice, than does S. Paul : yet in his judgment whatsoever is sold in the shambles may be bought without questions for conscience' sake. The food itself, though it be an *εἰδωλόθυτον*, is not affected.

The conclusion arrived at by Dr. Resch after an exhaustive inquiry is that the original form of the Apostolic Decree is the form which prohibits the three grave moral offences, idolatry, fornication, and bloodshed. It is interesting to know that he has persuaded Dr. Harnack to accept this conclusion. In his *Apostelgeschichte* (1908) Dr. Harnack says : " I have since come to another judgment, I may say in spite of much struggling and after long deliberation. I do not like correcting myself—and it is not the first time—but *magis amica veritas*. . . . The *umschwung* (*volte-face*) was brought about by the admirable and thorough treatment of the subject by Resch junior."<sup>1</sup>

More space cannot here be given to this interesting inquiry. If the original form of the decree forbade the three great sins, which all early Christian history regarded as by eminence the capital sins, it is reasonable to conclude that the decree was largely responsible for the attitude of the Christian Church towards those sins. Certainly two at least of the Christian writers, Tertullian and Pacian, directly refer to the decree as a primary authority for this attitude of the Christian Church. These references may be cited.

Tertullian in his Montanist treatise *De Pudicitia* (c. A.D. 220), writing against the novel decision of Callistus that offenders in the matter of impurity might after penance be reconciled, expresses himself as follows :—

Tertullian  
cites the  
Decree as  
prohibiting  
idolatry,  
fornication,  
and blood-  
shed.

" ' It seemed good,' they say, ' to the Holy Ghost and to us to place upon you no further burden than of those things, from which it is necessary that abstinence should be made, from sacrifices and from fornications and blood, from which observing (abstinence) ye do well, the Holy Spirit guiding you.' It suffices that here has been kept for adultery and fornication the place of honour between idolatry and homicide, for let us much rather understand the prohibition of blood as of human blood. Then what sort of crimes do the Apostles wish those to seem, which alone they select for the pristine law in their observance, which alone they prescribe as of necessity to be abstained from? Not that they permit others, but that they put forward these only as being not remissible, they who for the sake of the Gentiles make the other burdens of the law remissible."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> P. 190.

<sup>2</sup> *De Pudicitia*, 12.



In this passage Tertullian, reading the Apostolic Decree without *things strangled*, understands *blood* as meaning homicide, and *εἰδωλόθῦτα* as participation in sacrifice to idols, and proceeds to assert that the Apostles selected the three capital sins of idolatry, impurity and bloodshed as being non-remissible.

Also S.  
Pacian.

S. Pacian, bishop of Barcelona in the second half of the fourth century (c. A.D. 343–392), writing from the Catholic standpoint, says :—

“ Again lower down, ‘ It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, that no further burden should be placed upon you beyond this : It is necessary that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood and from fornication; from which if ye observe abstinence ye shall do well. Fare ye well.’ This is the entire conclusion of the New Testament. The Holy Spirit having disregarded many (offences) has handed down to us that these are in the condition of deadly peril. The remaining sins are cured by the compensation of better works : but these three crimes are to be feared as the breath of some basilisk, as a cup of poison, as a deadly snare; for they know how not merely to pollute the soul, but to cut it off. Accordingly, obduracy will be redeemed by kindness, vituperation by satisfaction, sadness by cheerfulness, asperity by mildness, levity by gravity, crookedness by straightforwardness; and whatsoever faults there may be find repair by their contraries. But what will the despiser of God do? What will the blood-guilty do? What remedy will the fornicator adopt? For will the deserter of God be able to please Him? or will he who has shed another’s blood be able to preserve his own? or can he restore the temple of God who has violated it by fornication? Brethren, these (sins) are capital : these are mortal.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus S. Pacian towards the end of four Christian centuries, is at one with Tertullian at the end of two, in understanding the Apostolic Decree to be concerned with the three great moral offences of idolatry, impurity, and bloodshed; and in referring to the Apostolic council as the occasion when the Holy Spirit selected these three sins as above others capital or mortal.<sup>2</sup>

#### 4. *Sins unto death, and sins not unto death.*

Some sins  
shut out  
from life :  
others do  
not.

The distinction drawn in this passage between sins unto death and sins not unto death is one of essential importance. There are sins unto death; capital, mortal, or deadly sins as they are

<sup>1</sup> *Parænesis ad pœnitentiam* (P. L., XIII. 1083).

<sup>2</sup> On the Apostolic Decree reference may also be made to Sanday, *The Apostolic Decree*, Leipzig, 1908; Kirsopp Lake, *The Judaistic Controversy and the Apostolic Council*, in *Church Quarterly Review*, Jan. 1911; Böckenhoff, Dr. Karl, *Das apostolische Speisegesetz in den ersten fünf Jahrhunderten*. In the authorities above I have ventured to print Dr. Sanday’s broad contrast of the Eastern and Western texts.

variously called: and there are sins not unto death; minor, or venial sins. It will be seen in the course of the present inquiry that very various lists of the deadly sins are to be found in the Christian writers. The capital sins by eminence of the earliest centuries were idolatry, impurity, and bloodshed. These were all at one time placed outside the scope of reconciliation by the Church in this life, and left to the justice and mercy of God. As they were one by one admitted to the absolution of the Church they yet remained by eminence the sins which called for exemplary discipline of penance. At the other end of the scale are sins which by common consent have ever been regarded as venial, sins which neither by their objective character nor by the malignity of their intention can be regarded as placing a soul outside God's reconciliation; sins into which the just man may fall seven times a day, and for the wiping out of which no more is needed than the recurring prayer for forgiveness which the Lord has placed upon our lips. A difficult class of sins is the class of grave, if minor, offences which are intermediate between the three great capital offences on the one hand, and on the other the sins which by common consent are held to be venial. The received moral theology of the modern Latin church has a long list of sins now regarded as mortal, and for the forgiveness of which particular confession to a priest is held to be ordinarily required.

What is to be understood by the distinction between sins unto death and sins not unto death? The human soul must at a particular moment of time be either reconciled to God, and so in a state of grace and life; or not reconciled to God, and so in a state of sin and death. It is possible to pass from one state to the other. By Baptism with water and the Spirit the unreconciled man is, if rightly disposed, brought within the fold of the reconciled. By deadly sin after Baptism the reconciled man falls away from his state of grace and life, and reverts to the condition of the unreconciled, the state of sin and death. This disastrous happening must be understood to take effect at a particular moment in this life. Up to that moment the man has had his place among the reconciled. From that moment he is reckoned among the unreconciled.

Next comes the question: How will this affect his condition hereafter? If there be no repentance, the answer appears to be simple. The state of death will perpetuate itself. That which is will continue to be. Alienation remains alienation. From death comes only death. If, however, there be repentance, and that a repentance which, though imperfect, can find acceptance of the Lord, what will result? If the Church admit the penitent to reconciliation at a point of time in this present life, it has been understood that the Lord will ratify such acceptance at such present point of time. If the Church for whatsoever reason retain the sin, and hold the sinner bound, it has been

*The rational-  
ale of this  
distinction.*

*How does it  
affect the  
condition  
hereafter?*



understood that the Lord will no less in this present time retain the sin and hold the sinner bound. Yet if He find the penitence worthy of ultimate acceptance, that acceptance is assured. In the last great day of the Lord the sinner shall be found accepted. And even here on earth during his time of penitence, though he be held bound by the Church, he is not outside the possibilities of grace and blessing. His very penitence could not be his save for the grace of the Lord. The symbolic laying on of hands in the old Liturgies betokens his capacity for blessing.

### 5. *Apostolic practice.*

A forward  
glance over  
the Christian  
practice of  
the first  
three  
centuries.

Before considering the evidence of Apostolic practice as regards the exercise of the Lord's commission to bind and to loose, to remit and to retain; it may be of service to project the mind forward to what is known of the practice of the Church in the periods next following the Apostolic, the periods from the end of the first century to the end of the third. Hermas of Rome, whose date may be A.D. 100 (or A.D. 140) will be found to state that certain teachers of his day admitted no other remission of capital offences than the remission in Baptism. With this teaching in principle he expresses agreement, or rather represents the Angel of Penitence as expressing agreement: but he also professes to communicate a revelation that in view of the imminence of persecution and perhaps of the end of the world one Penance with restoration should be presently admitted up to a limiting day. From this concession he would exclude the worst apostates. Hermas also speaks of some teachers of his time who were careless about penitence, and who would keep the door open without much concern. Such teachers he reprobates. Thus at the beginning of the second century there are at least two strains of opinion and practice; and the more rigid aspect finds at any rate respectful adhesion.

In the early part of the third century when Callistus announces that he is prepared to admit to reconciliation the penitent adulterer, his action, though no doubt finding a large measure of support in current opinion, can nevertheless be represented by Tertullian as altogether revolutionary. The recognised practice of at least the Western churches, which, as regards adulterers, Callistus is prepared to modify, is to refuse reconciliation in this life to capital offenders.

The rigorism of the latter half of the second century appears to be one of the established facts of history. The action of Callistus early in the third century indicates the alteration of Church practice in the direction of leniency as regards sins of impurity. The period of controversy following the Decian persecution (A.D. 250) shows a similar alteration as regards the sin of apostasy. The sin of homicide is also in time admitted to reconciliation, but with less precision of date. Broadly it may be



said that from the Decian persecution the more rigid attitude is banished to the Novatianist sect. By the Council of Nicæa all sins are pronounced admissible to reconciliation in this life.

With this remarkable record of the early centuries before him the student will be prepared to expect the possibility of various action in Apostolic times. If the date of *Hermas* be as early as A.D. 100, as it may be; and if in his day approved teachers were prepared to refuse reconciliation in this life to capital sin after Baptism; it will not be surprising if a similar attitude is found in some passages of the New Testament. It will be no less intelligible if before experience had called forth a normal standard of practice, Apostolic authority is found not only binding but loosing persons guilty of the gravest offence. The evidence may now be considered in detail.

Some variance of practice may be expected in Apostolic times.

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews is best understood as favouring the sterner attitude at least as regards apostates. Tertullian, who affirms that the writer of the epistle was S. Barnabas, quotes him unhesitatingly in this sense in his Montanist treatise *De Pudicitia*.

The Epistle to the Hebrews.

The epistle refers to the condition of apostates in the following terms:—

Apostates not admissible to restoration.

“For as touching those who were once enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted the good word of GOD, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance (*μετάνοιαν*;) seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of GOD afresh, and put him to an open shame.”<sup>1</sup>

The falling away is one of open character best understood as formal apostasy under persecution. The persons are referred to as having been baptized (*φωτισθέντας*). They are also said to have tasted of the heavenly gift, and to have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost. Participation in the Holy Eucharist may be understood, and probably also Confirmation. The word used for repentance, *μετάνοια*, is found in early use by Christian writers as the technical term for the status of penitents performing their period of penance in the hope of restoration. If the epistle to the Hebrews is of too early date to admit a technical character in the term, it is probably none the less the status of a penitent in view of restoration which must here be understood. Such restoration is not possible in the case of apostates: “it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance.”

If the passage be thus understood to mean that apostates were not admissible to any penance which in this life would lead to restoration, it only expresses what was the common judgment of

<sup>1</sup> Heb. vi. 4-6 (R.V.).

This need not foreclose the final judgment of the Lord.

the Christian communities during the second century and on to the Decian persecution. Special exigencies might call for special regulations, as when persecution was imminent; but normally the apostate had to stand outside the communion of the Church in this present life. The question at once arises whether the passage is to be held to convey any further indication as to the condition of the person at the final judgment of the Lord. In the studies of the early centuries which follow it will be found that while the binding of the sinner was accepted as a binding having present efficacy with the ratification of the Lord, it was also almost unanimously understood that the present binding in no way foreclosed the judgment of the Lord at the last great day. The position accepted was in fact the position of S. Paul in the case of the incestuous Corinthian when he bade the Corinthian church "to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." So far from final condemnation being necessarily involved in the present binding, the saving of the spirit in the day of the Lord Jesus was at least part of the purpose in view when the binding was imposed.

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews has a solemn passage as regards the future judgment. In the tenth chapter he writes:—

But the writer has anticipations of dread.

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries. A man that hath set at nought Moses' law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense. And, again, the Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."<sup>1</sup>

The writer is still dealing with the case of the apostate, "who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace." Without any certain pronouncement as to the final judgment, the writer here appears inclined to anticipate the worst. The expectation of the sinner must be one of dread (*φοβερὰ δέ τις ἐκδοκῇ*). Judgment at the hands of the living God must be a thing dreadful (*φοβερόν*).

<sup>1</sup> Heb. x. 26-31 (R.V.).



Another passage illustrating the sterner attitude is to be found in the twelfth chapter. Fornicators and profane persons to be rejected.

“Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one mess of meat sold his own birthright. For ye know that even when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected (for he found no place of repentance) though he sought it diligently with tears.”<sup>1</sup>

It will be noticed that whereas in the passages already cited the apostate only was referred to, in the present passage reference is made to two of the three capital sins, to fornication as well as to apostasy. The case of Esau, who sold his birthright for food, is rather the case of the apostate. For such an one though he bring a tearful sorrow there is no place of *μετάνοια*; no course of restorative penance in this life.

It would thus appear that the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews must be understood in each of these three passages to bar certain offenders from Church communion at least in this life. In so doing he takes a sterner position than would seem to have been taken by S. Paul and by S. John. But it may be remembered that the difference is in no way greater than the differences illustrated by various ages of the Church, and that the Divinely given discretion which in those following ages under various conditions reached various conclusions, may be expected no less to find expression in somewhat varied action in the Apostolic age, when as yet no normal standard of practice had found acceptance. The Epistle to the Hebrews takes a sterner position than is taken by S. Paul and S. John.

The procedure of S. Paul may next receive attention. The first case which calls for notice is that of the incestuous Corinthian. In S. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians he deals with the case of a man guilty of “such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles, that one of you hath his father's wife.” The Corinthian Christians had shown a reprehensible indifference in the matter. S. Paul takes action by virtue of his Apostolic authority. In a striking passage he describes how he proceeded to exercise his Apostolic commission of binding. Procedure of S. Paul. Case of the incestuous Corinthian.

“For I verily, being absent in body, but present in spirit, have already, as though I were present, judged him that hath so wrought this thing, in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”<sup>2</sup>

Here is described a definite and formal exercise of the commission of binding in which the Apostle's human spirit (*τοῦ ἐμοῦ πνεύματος*) operates together with the power (*σὺν τῇ δυνάμει*) of our The “binding” by S. Paul.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. xii. 16, 17 (R.V.).

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. v. 3-5 (R.V.).



Lord Jesus. The object of such exercise, as already noted, is not least that the spirit of the offender "may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." But the present effect is to cast the person forth from the Church altogether in such sort that he is delivered to Satan in this present life "for the destruction of the flesh."

What is delivery "to Satan"?

What is to be understood by this delivery to Satan for the destruction of the flesh? Tertullian at the beginning of the third century states that the Catholics who followed Callistus in what Tertullian condemns as laxity interpreted the "destruction of the flesh" as "the office of penance (*officium pœnitentiæ*). This appears to make satisfaction to God through the crushing of the flesh, by fastings and sordid apparel and neglect, and by positive effort of ill treatment, so that they argue from this that a fornicator, yea, even that incestuous person, was not delivered by the Apostle to the perdition of Satan, but to his amendment, as though about to receive pardon on account of the destruction, that is, the smiting down of the flesh, and that, accordingly, he did so receive it." To Tertullian in his Montanist days this interpretation appeared a perversion. He was not prepared to believe in the possibility of a pardon for incest in this present life following on the mere performance of penance.

"Binding" might or might not be followed by repentance.

It may be at once understood that the act of casting forth, the solemn exercise of the commission of binding, was at the time of its exercise independent of what followed. The person might repent, or he might not repent. In the solemn offices of the ages a public casting forth was the first ceremonial act of a public penance. After the casting forth came the solemn reception of the offender to penance by the bishop and clergy at the door of the church. This may be seen alike in the Syrian practice of the *Didascalia Apostolorum* (A.D. 252-270), and in the Roman offices.

Did S. Paul restore the incestuous Corinthian?

Did S. Paul in fact restore the incestuous Corinthian to the communion of the Church in this life? The question at once brings forward the passage in the second epistle.

"But if any hath caused sorrow, he hath caused sorrow, not to me, but in part (that I press not too heavily) to you all. Sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the many; so that contrariwise ye should rather forgive him, and comfort him, lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you to confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you whether ye are obedient in all things. But to whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for what I also have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything for your sakes have I forgiven it in the person of Christ; that no advantage may be gained over us by Satan: for we are not ignorant of his devices." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 5-11 (R.V.).

Now was the person whom S. Paul thus absolved the same person who had been cast forth from the Church by him for sin with a step-mother? Tertullian argues that he could not possibly have been the same person. It does not, however, appear that either Tertullian or the Catholic followers of Callistus had any sources of information which are not open to the student now. Tertullian had taken up the stricter position, a position supported by the general Christian practice of his time till Callistus admitted relaxations. He is not therefore prepared to allow that S. Paul was on the lenient side. Nor from the opposite standpoint can it be asserted with any certainty that the absolved person of the second epistle is the incestuous person of the first epistle. The sin of the absolved person is not specified. There is certainly a remembrance of causing sorrow by the utterances of a former epistle, which may be taken to refer to the strong protest of the first epistle regarding the incestuous person. But the presumption is less impressive if it be understood with several modern students that at least one other epistle intervened between the two epistles in our hands.<sup>1</sup> Yet, when all doubts have been weighed, it appears more likely than not that the person absolved of the second epistle is identical with the incestuous person of the first epistle. The sin had, happily, been notorious as an altogether outstanding offence. An indefinite reference would be quite sufficient to recall the offence to the minds of the Corinthian Christians as the offence of most obvious scandal among them. If this conclusion is reached it is one of great importance. S. Paul is shown admitting a person guilty of the capital or mortal sin of incest to reconciliation in this life. In so doing he would take up the position which was adopted by the Christian Church as regards sins of impurity from the time of Callistus, that is to say, from the beginning of the third century. He would not be favouring the rigorist position which obtained much vogue in the second century.

Probably the person restored of the second epistle is the same person.

If so, S. Paul absolves in a case of capital sin.

Whether the offender absolved was the incestuous person or not the procedure of reconciliation is instructive. The church of Corinth forgives the sinner, and S. Paul by his Apostolic authority concurs in and ratifies this forgiveness. "To whom ye forgive anything I forgive also." This forgiveness he exercises under the conviction that what he is doing is done by Christ: "for what I also have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, for your sakes have I forgiven it in the person of Christ (*ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ*)."<sup>1</sup> The absolving power so exercised, while it is exercised in the person of Christ, is yet motivated by certain conditions which are appreciable by the intelligence of the Apostle. The punishment is sufficient: more may overwhelm the person, and give Satan advantage. Also S. Paul wishes to act in concert

The procedure of reconciliation.

It is exercised in the person of Christ, yet motivated by considerations of circumstance.

<sup>1</sup> An increasing number of scholars regard 2 Cor. x.-xiii. as part of such an intermediate letter.



with the Corinthian church. They are prepared to accord forgiveness: S. Paul is also prepared to accord forgiveness, and this in some measure, at least, on their account (*δι' ὑμᾶς*). It will be noted, as this investigation proceeds, how the binding and loosing of the Church, which look to receive the present support and ratification of the Lord, are based in various churches and in various ages on considerations of various character. It may be claimed that it is precisely this adaptation to particular circumstance which explains the according of so tremendous a commission to poor human frailty.

Case of  
Hymenæus  
and Alex-  
ander.

Another instance of the exercise by S. Paul of the commission of binding is mentioned in the epistles to S. Timothy. In the first epistle Timothy is bidden to hold

“faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith: of whom is Hymenæus and Alexander; whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme.”<sup>1</sup>

In the second epistle is found another reference to the case of Hymenæus.

“But shun profane babblings: for they will proceed further in ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth a gangrene: of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus; men who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some. Howbeit the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness.”<sup>2</sup>

It thus appears that Hymenæus was “delivered unto Satan” for heretical teaching, and not, as the incestuous Corinthian, for moral fault. A leading feature in his teaching was that the resurrection was past already. It may be understood that he denied the reality of a future resurrection; and found a sufficient resurrection in the spiritual upraising of the Christian by grace. The connexion of these views with Gnosticism need not here receive attention. It is sufficient to note that for this teaching S. Paul delivered Hymenæus unto Satan, and with him one Alexander. The second passage associates with Hymenæus in his teaching another person named Philetus.

Delivery  
“unto  
Satan.”

It will be remarked that in both the instances in which S. Paul formally casts a person out from the Church, the instance of the incestuous Corinthian and that of Hymenæus and Alexander, he describes the action as a delivery unto Satan. There is the Church of Christ, the realm of grace: and there is the world outside, the realm of Satan. The person is thrust forth utterly from the realm of grace into the realm of Satan, and this is done by the Apostle “with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. i. 19, 20 (R.V.).

<sup>2</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 16–19 (R.V.).



thrusting forth from the Church, and delivery unto Satan, is the great decisive act of the commission of binding. But an important distinction should now be noticed. In the early centuries,<sup>1</sup> after this formal thrusting forth a person might seek to be admitted to the status of a penitent. The admission was not a matter of course. Some evidence of penitence, including ordinarily an acknowledgment of the sin, would have to be forthcoming. The person was in due course admitted formally to the status of a penitent: and this admission was in certain churches a solemn ceremonial act. Once so admitted he was in a position which has to be distinguished alike from that of the *fidelis* in full communion, and from that of the person thrust forth from the Church. He was excluded from communion, and in certain cases this exclusion might last for the whole term of life. But he was not excluded from the realm of grace. He was acknowledged as a child of the Church under correction: he was advanced from stage to stage, at least in certain churches, and at certain times: he was made the subject of the prayers of the faithful in the solemnities of the Liturgy: and in those solemnities there was even a place where he came up to receive the ceremonial laying on of the hands of the bishop and the clergy, an obvious token of their recognition, and of his own capacity to receive a benediction. Nothing of all this came the way of the man who, having been thrust forth, defiantly remained outside. He was delivered unto Satan, and with Satan he elected to abide, outside the realm of grace.

Distinction  
between this  
and the  
status of the  
penitent.

There is no call to read into the New Testament narrative the whole penitential procedure of the Church of later times. But the essential distinction which has been indicated must be understood. In the case of the incestuous Corinthian, if the reconciliation described in the second epistle in fact refers to him, the penitence of the offender must be understood to have found place. There was indeed a fear that, if reconciliation were deferred, he might be "swallowed up with overmuch sorrow." He is under the operation of grace. The reconciliation of the Lord may follow. In the case of Hymenæus and Alexander there is no indication that either penitence or reconciliation ever found place. They were delivered unto Satan with the intention and the hope that such delivery would teach them "not to blaspheme." So far as appears, they would not learn the lesson, but remained outside.

A warning to the modern student may be here in place. In modern practice the commission of loosing almost exhausts the field. But the commission of the Lord was a twofold commission. It included the commission to bind as well as the commission to loose; the commission to retain as well as the commission to

"Binding" a not less important part of the twofold Commission than "loosing."

<sup>1</sup> For the evidence the succeeding chapters of this history may be referred to.

remit. There is no suggestion in our Lord's words that either half of this commission is more important than the other. And as a matter of historical fact it will be found that in the earliest ages the commission to bind was more in evidence; it would almost seem that it was more valued; than the commission to loose. The Christian guilty of capital sin after Baptism, in which the mercy of the Lord had washed him clean, was a stumbling-block and a rock of offence. It was essential that the Church should not suffer herself to fall to his level. He must be thrust forth. In the case of the apostate, at least, it was felt in the times of persecution that the Church on earth had done with him, so far as admission to communion was concerned. These grave offenders could after all be left to the mercy of the Lord. They could be saved, if found worthy, in the day of the Lord Jesus. The Lord knoweth them that are His.

The *Revelation* of *S. John* shows the more lenient temper. The Angel of Ephesus. Capital sins in Pergamum

The evidence of the book of the *Revelation of S. John the Divine* may be taken as showing the temper of the churches of Asia Minor in Apostolic days. It is the more lenient, not the stricter, temper of those days. The angel of the church of Ephesus is warned that though his candlestick is still in its place it will be removed unless he repent for forsaking his first love. To the angel of the church in Pergamum, after opening words of high commendation, there comes this warning:—

“But I have a few things against thee because thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. So also hast thou some that hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner. Repent therefore; or else I come to thee quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth.”<sup>1</sup>

The sins of Christians in Pergamum thus included participation in idol sacrifices, and fleshly impurity; two of the capital sins. They also included the heretical teaching of the Nicolaitans. The threatened visitation would not take effect if repentance were at once forthcoming. But it cannot be certainly determined whether the repentance which would thus avert the Lord's visitation was the repentance of the angel or bishop for the unworthy sufferance of evil; or the repentance of the persons guilty of the grave offences specified. If the latter, it would appear that these offenders might find reconciliation. And from the epistle to the angel of the church in Thyatira it may be inferred that reconciliation in this life was held to be possible for such offenders.

may find reconciliation.

Also in Thyatira.

“But I have this against thee, that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess; and she

<sup>1</sup> Rev. ii. 14–16 (R.V.).



teacheth and seduceth my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time that she should repent; and she willeth not to repent of her fornication. Behold I do cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of her works.”<sup>1</sup>

It is reasonable here to understand that an actual member of the Thyatiran church, a woman who put forward spiritual pretensions, had induced certain men among the faithful both to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. They had thus committed two of the three grave capital sins. It is expressly stated that to this person, who is styled Jezebel, time was given in which she might repent. Forgiveness would presumably have followed her repentance. But she would not repent. To the sharers in her offence “great tribulation” is threatened, “except they repent of her works.” Repentance would avert this “great tribulation.” It would also presumably have brought forgiveness.

Thus the evidence of the epistles to the churches of Asia goes to show that the temper of those churches would be found on the side of the more lenient, and not on that of the stricter, tradition.

The well-known story of S. John and the robber should here receive attention. Its preservation is due to S. Clement of Alexandria (c. A.D. 200) who, in the short book commonly headed *Liber quis dives salvetur* has handed down this “story, which is yet not a story, but a true narrative.”

Story of  
S. John and  
the robber.

According to this narrative S. John, after his release from Patmos, returned to Ephesus, and in the oversight of the neighbouring churches visited various centres. Coming to one city not far from Ephesus he committed to the care of the bishop a young man of promising qualities, and having done this, returned to Ephesus. The bishop, taking the young man into his house, trained him, and eventually baptised him. Then he relaxed his supervision, and the young man fell among bad companions, and adopted criminal practices, becoming in the end himself a robber chief. He is described as surpassing the other robbers in violence, bloodguiltiness, and ferocity. When S. John next visited the city, the young man's story was related to him. He blamed the bishop for his negligence, and set out himself to find the erring sheep. Arrived in the vicinity of the robber band, he was taken prisoner, and was being led by the robbers into the presence of their chief, when the latter, recognising the saint, fled from him. S. John pursued him, and telling him that he had been sent by Christ, besought him to have mercy on him (S. John), and declared that the hope of salvation remained to the offender (ἔχεις ἐτι ζωῆς ἐλπίδα). From the word *μυαιφονώτατος* which S. Clement applies

<sup>1</sup> Rev. ii. 20-22 (R.V.).

A homicide  
reconciled.

to the robber it will be reasonable to understand that he was guilty of homicide, probably of multiple homicide. Yet, notwithstanding this, S. John proceeds to reconcile the offender, who now weeps tears of bitter penitence.

“Then he (the Apostle) giving his word and making oath that he had found remission for him from the Saviour, beseeching him, kneeling to him, kissing his right hand as now cleansed by penitence, led him back to the Church. Then making supplication with a wealth of prayers, and wrestling in company with him in continuous fasts, and farther persuading him by manifold exhortations, he did not leave him, so they say, till he had re-established him in the Church; thus affording a great example of true penitence and a great instance of recovered life (παλιγγενείας). . . .”<sup>1</sup>

Thus in this story S. John and the churches of the Ephesian district are shown as admitting restoration in the case of a homicide.

<sup>1</sup> S. Clemens Alex., *Quis dives salvetur*, c. 42.



## II. THE SUB-APOSTOLIC PERIOD

### TEXT OF AUTHORITIES

**Hermas (? A.D. 100).**

[Hermas, notices of] in the Muratorian Fragment, in the Liberian Catalogue, and perhaps in Hippolytus.

**S. Clement of Rome (c. A.D. 96).**

**S. Ignatius of Antioch (c. A.D. 112).**

**S. Polycarp of Smyrna (bishop, c. A.D. 110).**

**The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (Didache).**

**An ancient Homily (formerly known as the Second Epistle of S. Clement).**

[Cerdon, c. A.D. 135, notice of] in S. Irenæus.

[Marcion, c. A.D. 141, notices of] in S. Epiphanius and in pseudo-Tertullianus.

[*Passages in which Hermas styles the communications made to him revelations, using the words ἀποκαλύπτω, ἀποκαλύψις.*]

**Hermas, Pastor (? A.D. 100).** [Ed. Funk, Tübingen, 1887.]

*Vis. ii. 2.* [Funk, I. 344.]

Μετὰ δὲ δέκα καὶ πέντε ἡμέρας νηστεύσαντός μου καὶ πολλὰ ἐρωτήσαντος τὸν κύριον ἀπεκαλύφθη μοι ἡ γνῶσις τῆς γραφῆς.

*Vis. ii. 2.* [Funk, I. 346.]

Μετὰ τὸ γνωρίσαι σε ταῦτα τὰ ῥήματα αὐτοῖς, ἃ ἐνετείλατό μοι ὁ δεσπότης ἵνα σοι ἀποκαλυφθῇ, τότε ἀφίενται αὐτοῖς αἱ ἁμαρτίαι πᾶσαι.

*Vis. ii. 4.* [Funk, I. 348.]

Ἀπεκαλύφθη δέ μοι, ἀδελφοί, κοιμωμένῳ ὑπὸ νεανίσκου εὐειδεστάτου.

*Vis. iii. 1.* [Funk, I. 350.]

Νηστεύσας πολλάκις καὶ δεηθεὶς τοῦ κυρίου, ἵνα μοι φανερώσῃ τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν, ἣν μοι ἐπηγγείλατο δεῖξαι διὰ τῆς πρεσβυτέρας ἐκείνης.

*Vis. iii. 3.* [Funk, I. 358.]

Ἄκουε οὖν τὰς παραβολὰς τοῦ πύργου· ἀποκαλύψω γάρ σοι πάντα, καὶ μηκέτι μοι κόπους παρέχε περὶ ἀποκαλύψεως· αἱ γὰρ ἀποκαλύψεις αὗται τέλος ἔχουσιν· πεπληρωμένοι γάρ εἰσιν. Ἄλλ' οὐ παύσῃ αἰτούμενος ἀποκαλύψεις· ἀναιδὴς γὰρ εἶ.

**Hermas.***Vis.* iii. 4.

[Funk, I. 360.]

Ἀποκριθεῖσά μοι λέγει· Οὐχ ὅτι σὺ ἐκ πάντων ἀξιώτερος εἶ, ἵνα σοι ἀποκαλυφθῇ· ἄλλοι γὰρ σου πρότεροί εἰσιν καὶ βελτίονές σου, οἷς ἔδει ἀποκαλυφθῆναι τὰ ὁράματα ταῦτα.

*Vis.* iii. 10.

[Funk, I. 374.]

Περὶ τούτων περίλυπος ἦμην λίαν τοῦ γινῶναί με τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν ταύτην . . . τί σὺ ὑπὸ χεῖρα αἰτεῖς ἀποκαλύψεις ἐν δεήσει; . . . Ἀρκοῦσιν σοι αἱ ἀποκαλύψεις αὗται. Μήτι δύνῃ ἰσχυροτέρας ἀποκαλύψεις ὧν ἑώρακας ἰδεῖν; Ἀποκριθεὶς αὐτῷ λέγω· Κύριε τοῦτο μόνον αἰτοῦμαι, περὶ τῶν τριῶν μορφῶν τῆς πρεσβυτέρας ἵνα ἀποκάλυψις ὁλοτελὴς γένηται.

*Vis.* iii. 13.

[Funk, I. 376.]

Ἀπεχεις ὁλοτελῇ τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν· μηκέτι μηδὲν αἰτήσεις περὶ ἀποκαλύψεως, εἰάν τι δὲ δέῃ, ἀποκαλυφθήσεται σοι.

*Vis.* iv. 1.

[Funk, I. 378.]

Μόνος οὖν περιπατῶν ἀξιώ τὸν κύριον, ἵνα τὰς ἀποκαλύψεις καὶ τὰ ὁράματα, ἃ μοι ἔδειξεν διὰ τῆς ἀγίας Ἐκκλησίας αὐτοῦ, τελειώσῃ.

[*Hermas the brother of Pius, Bishop of Rome.*]

**Muratorian Fragment.** [Westcott, *Canon of N. T.*, 4th ed., 1875, p. 519.]

pastorem vero nuperrim et temporibus nostris in urbe roma herma conscripsit sedente cathetra urbis romæ acclesie pio eps frater eius et ideo legi eum quidē oportet se puplicare uero in eclesia populo neque inter profetas completum numero nene inter apostolos in fine temporum potest.

[*Pius had a brother Ermes, who wrote the "Shepherd."*]**Catalogus Liberianus.**[Duchesne, *Lib. Pont.*, I. 4.]

Pius ann. xx. m. iiii. d. xxi. fuit temporibus Antonini Pii, a cons. Clari et Severi usque duobus Augustis; sub hujus episcopatu frater eius Ermes librum scripsit, in quo mandatum continetur, quæ ei præcepit angelus, cum venit ad illum in habitu pastoris.

[*The statement of Elkesai that the remission of sins had been revealed in the third year of Trajan.*]**Hippolytus, Refutatio omnium hæresium.**

IX. 13.

[Migne, *P. C.*, XVII. 3387.]

Ταῦτα τετραλογῶν νομίζει ταρασσεῖν τοὺς μωροὺς λέγων λόγον τοῦτον· εὐηγγελίσθαι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις καινὴν ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν ἐπὶ Τραϊανοῦ βασιλείας τρίτῳ, καὶ βάπτισμα ὀρίζει, ὃ καὶ αὐτὸ διηγῆσομαι, φάσκων τοὺς ἐν πάσῃ



**Hippolytus.**

ἀσελγεία καὶ μiasmῶ καὶ ἀνομήμασιν ἐμφυρέντας, εἰ καὶ πιστὸς εἴη, ἐπιστρέψαντα καὶ τῆς βίβλου κατακούσαντα καὶ πιστεύσαντα, ὀρίζει βαπτίσματι λαμβάνειν ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.

*[On hearty repentance all their sins will be forgiven to the sons of Hermas, and to all the saints up to a present definite day. After that they will not find salvation : repentance will not avail.]*

**Hermas, Pastor.**

*Vis. ii. 2.*

[Funk, I. 346.]

Μετὰ τὸ γνωρίσαι σε ταῦτα τὰ ῥήματα αὐτοῖς, ἃ ἐνετείλατό μοι ὁ δεσπότης ἵνα σοι ἀποκαλυφθῇ, τότε ἀφίενται αὐτοῖς αἱ ἁμαρτίαι πᾶσαι, ἃς πρότερον ἥμαρτον, καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς ἁμαρτήσασιν μέχρι ταύτης τῆς ἡμέρας, ἐὰν ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας μετανοήσωσιν καὶ ἄρωσιν ἀπὸ τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν τὰς διψυχίας. Ὡμοσεν γὰρ ὁ δεσπότης κατὰ τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς αὐτοῦ· ἐὰν ὠρισμένης τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης ἔτι ἁμάρτησις γένηται, μὴ ἔχειν αὐτοὺς σωτηρίαν· ἡ γὰρ μετάνοια τοῖς δικαίοις ἔχει τέλος· πεπλήρωνται αἱ ἡμέραι μετανοίας πᾶσιν τοῖς ἁγίοις· καὶ τοῖς δὲ ἔθνεσιν μετάνοιά ἐστιν ἕως ἐσχάτης ἡμέρας.

*[Blessed are they who shall not deny in the coming great tribulation. For the Lord has sworn that future deniers shall be reprobate : but for past offence his mercy is accorded.]*

*Vis. ii. 2.*

[Funk, I. 346.]

Μακάριοι ὑμεῖς, ὅσοι ὑπομένετε τὴν θλίψιν τὴν ἐρχομένην τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ὅσοι οὐκ ἀρνήσονται τὴν ζωὴν αὐτῶν. Ὡμοσεν γὰρ κύριος κατὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, τοὺς ἀρνησαμένους τὸν κύριον αὐτῶν ἀπεγνωρίσθαι ἀπὸ τῆς ζωῆς αὐτῶν, τοὺς νῦν μέλλοντας ἀρνεῖσθαι ταῖς ἐρχομέναις ἡμέραις· τοῖς δὲ πρότερον ἀρνησαμένοις, διὰ τὴν πολυσπαγλίαν ἰλεως ἐγένετο αὐτοῖς.

*[Of the coming tribulation. They who deny will be rejected from life. For past denial mercy is forthcoming.]*

*Vis. ii. 2.*

[Funk, I. 346.]

Μακάριοι ὑμεῖς, ὅσοι ὑπομένετε τὴν θλίψιν τὴν ἐρχομένην τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ὅσοι οὐκ ἀρνήσονται τὴν ζωὴν αὐτῶν. Ὡμοσεν γὰρ κύριος κατὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, τοὺς ἀρνησαμένους τὸν κύριον αὐτῶν ἀπεγνωρίσθαι ἀπὸ τῆς ζωῆς αὐτῶν, τοὺς νῦν μέλλοντας ἀρνεῖσθαι ταῖς ἐρχομεναῖς ἡμέραις· τοῖς δὲ πρότερον ἀρνησαμένοις, διὰ τὴν πολυσπαγχνίαν ἰλεως ἐγένετο αὐτοῖς.

*[Message to Maximus, an apostate, regarding the coming persecution. The Lord is near those who turn to Him.]*

*Vis. ii. 3.*

[Funk, I. 348.]

Ἐρεῖς δὲ Μαξίμω· Ἰδοὺ θλίψις ἔρχεται· ἐάν σοι φανῇ, πάλιν ἄρνησαι. Ἐγγὺς κύριος τοῖς ἐπιστρεφομένοις, ὡς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ Ἑλδὰδ καὶ Μωδάτ, τοῖς προφητεύσασιν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τῷ λαῷ.

**Hermas.**

[*The Church has more words to add. When all the words are finished, they are to be made known through Hermas to all the elect.*]

Vis. ii. 4.

[Funk, I. 350.]

Μετέπειτα δὲ ὄρασιν εἶδον ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ μου. Ἦλθεν ἡ πρεσβυτέρα καὶ ἠρώτησέν με, εἰ ἤδη τὸ βιβλίον δέδωκα τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις. Ἠρνησάμην δεδωκέναι. Καλῶς, φησὶν, πεποίηκας· ἔχω γὰρ ῥήματα προσθεῖναι. Ὅταν οὖν ἀποτελέσω τὰ ῥήματα πάντα, διὰ σοῦ γνωρισθήσεται τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς πᾶσιν.

[*Hermas is to write two booklets (βιβλαρίδια), one for Clement, and one for Grapte. Clement will inform outside cities, Grapte the widows and orphans, while Hermas himself will make the words known to the city of Rome with the presbyters presiding over the church.*]

Vis. ii. 4.

[Funk, I. 350.]

Γράψεις οὖν δύο βιβλαρίδια καὶ πέμψεις ἐν Κλήμεντι καὶ ἐν Γραπτῇ. Πέμψει οὖν Κλήμης εἰς τὰς ἔξω πόλεις, ἐκείνῳ γὰρ ἐπιτέτραπται· Γραπτῇ δὲ νουθετήσει τὰς χήρας καὶ τοὺς ὀρφανούς. Σὺ δὲ ἀναγνώσῃ εἰς ταύτην τὴν πόλιν μετὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων τῶν προϋσταμένων τῆς ἐκκλησίας.

[*Hermas and all who doubt not will be cleansed from all their sins up to the present time.*]

Vis. iii. 2.

[Funk, I. 354.]

Σὺ δὲ κατεπίθυμος εἶ καθίσαι ἐκ δεξιῶν μετ' αὐτῶν, ἀλλὰ τὰ ὑστερήματά σου πολλά· καθαρισθήσῃ δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν ὑστερημάτων σου· καὶ πάντες δὲ οἱ μὴ διψυχοῦντες καθαρισθήσονται ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων εἰς ταύτην τὴν ἡμέραν.

[*The stones not used in building the tower.*]

Vis. iii. 2.

[Funk, I. 356.]

Τοὺς δὲ ἐτέρους λίθους τοὺς φερομένους ἀπὸ τῆς ξηρᾶς τοὺς μὲν ἀπέβαλλον τοὺς δὲ ἐτίθουν εἰς τὴν οἰκοδομήν· ἄλλους δὲ κατέκοπτον καὶ ἔρριπτον μακρὰν ἀπὸ τοῦ πύργου.

[*The stones rejected and thrown aside are sinners who may repent. If they do penance now they will be embodied in the building. When the building is complete there will be no place for them.*]

Vis. iii. 5.

[Funk, I. 362.]

Οὓς δὲ ἀπέβαλλον καὶ ἐρίπτουν, τίνες εἰσὶν; Οὗτοί εἰσιν ἡμαρτηκότες καὶ θέλοντες μετανοῆσαι· διὰ τοῦτο μακρὰν οὐκ ἀπερίφησαν ἔξω τοῦ πύργου, ὅτι εὐχρηστοὶ ἔσονται εἰς τὴν οἰκοδομήν, ἐὰν μετανοήσωσιν. Οἱ οὖν μέλλοντες μετανοεῖν, ἐὰν μετανοήσωσιν, ἰσχυροὶ ἔσονται ἐν τῇ πίστει, ἐὰν νῦν μετανοήσωσιν, ἐν ᾧ οἰκοδομεῖται ὁ πύργος· ἐὰν δὲ τελεσθῇ ἡ οἰκοδομή, οὐκέτι



**Hermas.**

ἔχουσιν τόπον, ἀλλ' ἔσονται ἔκβολοι· μόνον δὲ τοῦτο ἔχουσιν, παρὰ τῷ πύργῳ κείσθαι.

[For the stones cast far away there remains a place of repentance, but not in this tower of the Church.]

Vis. iii. 7.

[Funk, I. 366.]

Ἀναιδευσάμενος ἔτι αὐτὴν ἐπηρώτησα, εἰ ἄρα πάντες οἱ λίθοι οὗτοι οἱ ἀποβεβλημένοι καὶ μὴ ἀρμόζοντες εἰς τὴν οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ πύργου, εἰ ἔστιν αὐτοῖς μετάνοια καὶ ἔχουσιν τόπον εἰς τὸν πύργον τοῦτον. Ἐχουσιν, φησίν, μετάνοιαν, ἀλλὰ εἰς τοῦτον τὸν πύργον οὐ δύνανται ἀρμόσαι· ἐτέρῳ δὲ τόπῳ ἀρμόσουσιν πολὺ ἐλλάττονι καὶ τοῦτο, ὅταν βασανισθῶσιν καὶ ἐκπληρώσωσιν τὰς ἡμέρας τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν. Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο μετατεθήσονται, ὅτι μετέλαβον τοῦ ῥήματος τοῦ δικαίου. Καὶ τότε αὐτοῖς συμβήσεται μετατεθῆναι ἐκ τῶν βασάνων αὐτῶν, ἐὰν ἀναβῇ ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτῶν τὰ ἔργα ἃ εἰργάσαντο πονηρά. Ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἀναβῇ ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτῶν, οὐ σώζονται διὰ τὴν σκληροκαρδίαν αὐτῶν.

[When the tower is built, there comes an end. It will be built shortly.]

Vis. iii. 8.

[Funk, I. 368.]

Ἐπηρώτων δὲ αὐτὴν περὶ τῶν καιρῶν, εἰ ἤδη συντέλειά ἐστιν. Ἡ δὲ ἀνέκραγε φωνῇ μεγάλῃ λέγουσα· Ἀσύνετε ἄνθρωπε, οὐχ ὄρῳς τὸν πύργον ἔτι οἰκοδομούμενον; Ὡς ἐὰν οὖν συντελεσθῇ ὁ πύργος οἰκοδομούμενος, ἔχει τέλος. Ἀλλὰ ταχὺ ἐποικοδομηθήσεται.

[After three days Hermas is to announce this to the saints that they may be cleansed from their iniquities.]

Vis. iii. 8.

[Funk, I. 370.]

Μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας (νοῆσαι σε γὰρ δεῖ πρῶτον) ἐντέλλομαι σοι πρῶτον, Ἐρμᾶ, τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα, ἃ σοι μέλλω λέγειν, λαλῆσαι αὐτὰ πάντα εἰς τὰ ὦτα τῶν ἁγίων, ἵνα ἀκούσαντες αὐτὰ καὶ ποιήσαντες καθαρισθῶσιν ἀπὸ τῶν πονηριῶν αὐτῶν καὶ σὺ δὲ μετ' αὐτῶν.

[A heartfelt penitence will renew spiritual youth. With the present offer of reconciliation the woman who represents the Church in the vision assumes again a youthful semblance.]

Vis. iii. 13.

[Funk, I. 376.]

Τῇ δὲ τρίτῃ ὁράσει εἶδες αὐτὴν νεωτέραν καὶ καλὴν καὶ ἱλαρὰν καὶ καλὴν τὴν μορφήν αὐτῆς· ὥς ἐὰν γάρ τινι λυπουμενῷ ἔλθῃ ἀγγελία ἀγαθή τις, εὐθὺς ἐπελάθετο τῶν προτέρων λυπῶν καὶ οὐδὲν ἄλλο προσδέχεται εἰ μὴ τὴν ἀγγελίαν, ἣν ἤκουσεν, καὶ ἰσχυροποιεῖται λοιπὸν εἰς τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἀνανεοῦται αὐτοῦ τὸ πνεῦμα διὰ τὴν χαράν, ἣν ἔλαβεν· οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀνανεώσιν εἰλήφατε τῶν πνευμάτων ὑμῶν ἰδόντες ταῦτα τὰ ἀγαθὰ. Καὶ ὅτι ἐπὶ συμπελ-

**Hermas.**

λίον εἶδες καθημένην, ἰσχυρὰ ἢ θέσις· ὅτι τέσσαρας πόδας ἔχει τὸ συμψέλλιον καὶ ἰσχυρῶς ἔστηκεν· καὶ γὰρ ὁ κόσμος διὰ τεσσάρων στοιχείων κρατεῖται. Οἱ οὖν μετανοήσαντες ὀλοτελῶς νέοι ἔσονται καὶ τεθεμελιωμένοι, οἱ ἐξ ὅλης καρδίας μετανοήσαντες. Ἀπέχεις ὀλοτελῇ τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν· μηκέτι μηδὲν αἰτήσεις περὶ ἀποκαλύψεως, εἴαν τι δὲ δέῃ, ἀποκαλυφθήσεται σοι.

[*Hermas prays for the fulfilment of this revelation given to him through the Church, that he may be strengthened, and that repentance may be given to those who have sinned.*]

*Vis. iv. 1.*

[Funk, I. 378.]

Μόνος οὖν περιπατῶν ἀξιώ τὸν κύριον, ἵνα τὰς ἀποκαλύψεις καὶ τὰ ὁράματα, ἃ μοι ἔδειξεν διὰ τῆς ἁγίας Ἐκκλησίας αὐτοῦ, τελειώσῃ, ἵνα με ἰσχυροποιήσῃ καὶ δῶ τὴν μετάνοιαν τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ τοῖς ἐσκανδαλισμένοις, ἵνα δοξασθῇ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ τὸ μέγα καὶ ἑνδοξον, ὅτι με ἄξιον ἡγήσατο τοῦ δεῖξάί μοι τὰ θαυμάσια αὐτοῦ.

[*Hermas to announce to the elect the coming tribulation. Those who repent, and are faithful hereafter, will escape.*]

*Vis. iv. 2.*

[Funk, I. 382.]

Ὑπαγε οὖν καὶ ἐξήγησαι τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς τοῦ κυρίου τὰ μεγαλεῖα αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰπὲ αὐτοῖς, ὅτι τὸ θηρίον τοῦτο τύπος ἐστὶ θλίψεως τῆς μελλούσης τῆς μεγάλης· εἴαν οὖν προετοιμάσησθε καὶ μετανοήσητε ἐξ ὅλης καρδίας ὑμῶν πρὸς τὸν κύριον, δυνήσεσθε ἐκφυγεῖν αὐτήν, εἴαν ἡ καρδιά ὑμῶν γένηται καθαρὰ καὶ ἄμωμος καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς τῆς ζωῆς ἡμέρας ὑμῶν δουλεύσητε τῷ κυρίῳ ἀμέμπτως.

[*The Shepherd, the Angel of Penitence, commands Hermas to write the Commandments and Similitudes. Consequences of failure to repent.*]

*Vis. v. 7.*

[Funk, I. 386.]

Ἐγραψα οὖν τὰς ἐντολὰς καὶ παραβολὰς καθὼς ἐνετείλατό μοι. Ἐὰν οὖν ἀκούσαντες αὐτὰς φυλάξῃτε καὶ ἐν αὐταῖς πορευθῇτε καὶ ἐργάσησθε αὐτὰς ἐν καθαρᾷ καρδίᾳ, ἀπολήψεσθε ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου, ὅσα ἐπηγγείλατο ὑμῖν· εἴαν δὲ ἀκούσαντες μὴ μετανοήσητε, ἀλλ' ἔτι προσθῇτε ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν· ἀπολήψεσθε παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου τὰ ἐναντία. Ταῦτά μοι πάντα οὕτως γράψαι ὁ ποιμὴν ἐνετείλατο, ὁ ἄγγελος τῆς μετανοίας.

[*An adulterous wife who has been put away may be received by her husband on her repentance. But not repeatedly. For to the servants of God there is one repentance.*]

*Mand. iv. 1.*

[Funk, I. 394.]

Ἐὰν οὖν, φημί, κύριε, μετὰ τὸ ἀπολυθῆναι τὴν γυναῖκα μετανοήσῃ ἢ γυνὴ καὶ θελήσῃ ἐπὶ τὸν ἑαυτῆς ἄνδρα ὑποστρέψαι, οὐ παραδεχθήσεται; Καὶ μὴν,



**Hermas.**

φησίν, ἐὰν μὴ παραδέξῃται αὐτὴν ὁ ἀνὴρ, ἁμαρτάνει καὶ μεγάλην ἁμαρτίαν ἑαυτῷ ἐπισπᾶται, ἀλλὰ δεῖ παραδεχθῆναι τὸν ἡμαρτηκότα καὶ μετανοοῦντα μὴ ἐπὶ πολὺν δέ τοῖς γὰρ δούλοις τοῦ θεοῦ μετάνοιά ἐστιν μία. Διὰ τὴν μετάνοιαν οὖν οὐκ ὀφείλει γαρμεῖν ὁ ἀνὴρ. Αὕτη ἡ πρᾶξις ἐπὶ γυναικὶ καὶ ἀνδρὶ κείται.

[*The Shepherd is set over Penitence, and gives understanding for it.*]

*Mand. iv. 2.*

[Funk, I. 396.]

ἐγώ, φησίν, ἐπὶ τῆς μετανοίας εἰμὶ καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς μετανοοῦσιν σύνεσιν δίδωμι. \*Ἡ οὐ δοκεῖ σοι, φησίν, αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὸ μετανοῆσαι σύνεσιν εἶναι ; Τὸ μετανοῆσαι, φησίν, σύνεσις ἐστὶν μεγάλη· συνίει γὰρ ὁ ἁμαρτήσας, ὅτι πεποίηκεν τὸ πονηρὸν ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ κυρίου, καὶ ἀναβαίνει ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ ἡ πρᾶξις, ἣν ἔπραξεν, καὶ μετανοεῖ, καὶ οὐκέτι ἐργάζεται τὸ πονηρὸν, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀγαθὸν πολυτελῶς ἐργάζεται καὶ ταπεινοῖ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν, καὶ βασανίζει, ὅτι ἡμαρτεν.

[*No other μετάνοια but that of Baptism is the normal rule. Nor is there any other for those converted now, or in the future. For past sins of the baptized one only μετάνοια now open.*]

*Mand. iv. 3.*

[Funk, I. 396.]

\*Ἐτι, φημί, κύριε, προσθήσω τοῦ ἐπερωτῆσαι. Λέγε, φησίν. \*Ἦκουσα, φημί, κύριε, παρά τινων διδασκάλων, ὅτι ἑτέρα μετάνοια οὐκ ἔστιν εἰ μὴ ἐκείνη, ὅτε εἰς ὕδωρ κατέβημεν καὶ ἐλάβομεν ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν τῶν προτέρων. Λέγει μοι· καλῶς ἤκουσας· οὕτω γὰρ ἔχει. \*Ἐδει γὰρ τὸν εἰληφότα ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν μηκέτι ἁμαρτάνειν, ἀλλ' ἐν ἀγνείᾳ κατοικεῖν. Ἐπεὶ δὲ πάντα ἐξακριβάζῃ, καὶ τοῦτό σοι δηλώσω, μὴ διδοῦς ἀφορμὴν τοῖς μέλλουσι πιστεύειν ἢ τοῖς νῦν πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸν κύριον. Οἱ γὰρ νῦν πιστεύσαντες ἢ μέλλοντες πιστεύειν μετάνοιαν ἁμαρτιῶν οὐκ ἔχουσιν, ἄφεσιν δὲ ἔχουσι τῶν προτέρων ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν. Τοῖς οὖν κληθεῖσι πρὸ τούτων τῶν ἡμερῶν ἔθηκεν ὁ κύριος μετάνοιαν· καρδιογνώστης γὰρ ὢν ὁ κύριος καὶ πάντα προγινώσκων ἔγνω τὴν ἀσθένειαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τὴν πολυπλοκίαν τοῦ διαβόλου, ὅτι ποιήσει τι κακὸν τοῖς δούλοις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πονηρεύσεται εἰς αὐτούς· πολὺσπλαγχνος οὖν ὢν ὁ κύριος ἐσπλαγχνίσθη ἐπὶ τὴν ποίησιν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔθηκεν τὴν μετάνοιαν ταύτην, καὶ ἐμοὶ ἡ ἐξουσία τῆς μετανοίας ταύτης ἐδόθη. Ἀλλὰ ἐγώ σοι λέγω, φησί· μετὰ τὴν κλῆσιν ἐκείνην τὴν μεγάλην καὶ σεμνὴν ἐὰν τις ἐκπειρασθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου ἁμαρτήσῃ, μίαν μετάνοιαν ἔχει· ἐὰν δὲ ὑπὸ χεῖρα ἁμαρτάνῃ καὶ μετανοήσῃ, ἀσύμφορόν ἐστι τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ σὺ τοιούτῳ· δυσκόλως γὰρ ζήσεται. Λέγω αὐτῷ Ἐξωποιοῦσθαι ταῦτα παρὰ σοῦ ἀκούσας οὕτως ἀκριβῶς· οἶδα γάρ, ὅτι, ἐὰν μηκέτι προσθήσω ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις μου, σωθήσομαι. Σωθήσῃ, φησίν, καὶ πάντες, ὅσοι ἐὰν ταῦτα ποιήσωσιν.

**Hermas.**

*[If Hermas keep the Shepherd's commandments from the day when he was intrusted to the Shepherd, he (the Shepherd) will dwell in his house. And of all his former sins there will be remission. So, too, with all.]*

*Mand. iv. 4.*

[Funk, I. 400.]

Ταῦτά σοι ὅσα λαλῶ ἢ καὶ μέλλω λαλεῖν, φύλασσε ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν, ἀφ' ἧς μοι παρεδόθης ἡμέρας, καὶ εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου κατοικήσω. Τοῖς δὲ προτέροις σου παραπτώμασιν ἄφεσις ἔσται, ἐὰν τὰς ἐντολάς μου φυλάξης. Καὶ πᾶσι δὲ ἄφεσις ἔσται, ἐὰν τὰς ἐντολάς μου ταύτας φυλάξωσι καὶ πορευθῶσιν ἐν τῇ ἀγνότητι ταύτῃ.

*[Wrath, if not guarded against, will destroy all hope. But those who repent with all their hearts will be preserved.]*

*Mand. v. 1.*

[Funk, I. 402.]

Ἦθελον, φημί, κύριε, γνῶναι τὴν ἐνέργειαν τῆς ὀξυκολίας, ἵνα φυλάξωμαι ἀπ' αὐτῆς. Καὶ μὴν, φησίν, ἐὰν μὴ φυλάξῃ ἀπ' αὐτῆς σὺ καὶ ὁ οἶκός σου, ἀπώλεσάς σου τὴν πᾶσαν ἐλπίδα. Ἀλλὰ φύλαξαι ἀπ' αὐτῆς· ἐγὼ γὰρ μετὰ σοῦ εἰμί. Καὶ πάντες δὲ ἀφέζονται ἀπ' αὐτῆς, ὅσοι ἂν μετανοήσωσιν ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν· μετ' αὐτῶν γὰρ ἔσομαι καὶ συντηρήσω αὐτούς· ἐδικαιώθησαν γὰρ πάντες ὑπὸ τοῦ σεμνοτάτου ἀγγέλου.

*[Hermas to exhort to penitence. "Fulfil this ministry which I give thee, with care, and thou wilt effect much."]*

*Mand. xii. 3.*

[Funk, I. 432.]

Συνετέλεσεν οὖν τὰς ἐντολάς τὰς δώδεκα καὶ λέγει μοι. Ἐχεις τὰς ἐντολάς ταύτας· πορεύου ἐν αὐταῖς καὶ τοὺς ἀκούοντας παρακάλει, ἵνα ἡ μετάνοια αὐτῶν καθαρὰ γένηται τὰς λοιπὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ζωῆς αὐτῶν. Τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην, ἣν σοι δίδωμι, τέλει ἐπιμελῶς, καὶ πολὺ ἐργάσῃ· εὐρήσεις γὰρ χάριν ἐν τοῖς μέλλουσι μετανοεῖν, καὶ πεισθήσονται σου τοῖς ῥήμασιν· ἐγὼ γὰρ μετὰ σοῦ ἔσομαι καὶ ἀναγκάσω αὐτοὺς πεισθῆναί σοι.

*[The Angel of Penitence has mastery over the devil.]*

*Mand. xii. 4.*

[Funk, I. 436.]

καὶ μὴ φοβήθητε τὸν διάβολον, ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ δύναμις οὐκ ἔστιν καθ' ὑμῶν· ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔσομαι μεθ' ὑμῶν, ὁ ἄγγελος τῆς μετανοίας ὁ κατακυριεύων αὐτοῦ. Ὁ διάβολος μόνον φόβον ἔχει, ὁ δὲ φόβος αὐτοῦ τόνον οὐκ ἔχει· μὴ φοβήθητε οὖν αὐτόν, καὶ φεύξεται ἀφ' ὑμῶν.

*[The Angel of Penitence will be with the penitent, who need not fear the devil.]*

*Mand. xii. 6.*

[Funk, I. 436.]

Ἐγὼ δὲ ὑμῖν λέγω, ὁ ἄγγελος τῆς μετανοίας· μὴ φοβήθητε τὸν διάβολον. Ἀπεστάλην γάρ, φησί, μεθ' ὑμῶν εἶναι τῶν μετανοούντων ἐξ ὅλης καρδίας



**Hermas.**

αὐτῶν καὶ ἰσχυροποιῆσαι αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ πίστει. Πιστεύσατε οὖν τῷ θεῷ ὑμεῖς οἱ διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ὑμῶν ἀπεγνωκότες τὴν ζωὴν ὑμῶν καὶ προστιθέντες ἁμαρτίαις καὶ καταβαρύνοντες τὴν ζωὴν ὑμῶν, ὅτι, ἐὰν ἐπιστραφήτε πρὸς τὸν κύριον ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας ὑμῶν καὶ ἐργάσησθε τὴν δικαιοσύνην τὰς λοιπὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ζωῆς ὑμῶν καὶ δουλεύσητε αὐτῷ ὀρθῶς κατὰ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ, ποιήσει ἴασιν τοῖς προτέροις ὑμῶν ἁμαρτήμασι καὶ ἔξετε δύναμιν τοῦ κατακυριεύσαι τῶν ἔργων τοῦ διαβόλου.

*[Sinners who sinned here and did not repent will be punished hereafter.]*

*Sim. iv. 4.*

[Funk, I. 448.]

Τὰ δὲ ἔθνη καὶ οἱ ἁμαρτωλοί, ἃ εἶδες τὰ δένδρα τὰ ξηρά, τοιοῦτοι εὗρεθίσονται ξηροὶ καὶ ἄκαρποι ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ αἰῶνι καὶ ὡς ξύλα κατακαυθήσονται καὶ φανεροὶ ἔσονται· ὅτι ἡ πρᾶξις αὐτῶν πονηρὰ γέγονεν ἐν τῇ ζωῇ αὐτῶν.

*[Though the flesh is perishable, the defilement of it defiles the spirit: and this is deadly.]*

*Sim. v. 7.*

[Funk, I. 464.]

Βλέπε, μήποτε ἀναβῇ ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν σου τὴν σάρκα σου ταύτην φθαρτὴν εἶναι καὶ παραχρήσῃ αὐτῇ ἐν μiasmῳ τινί. Ἐὰν [γὰρ] μιάνῃς τὴν σάρκα σου, μιανεῖς καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον· ἐὰν δὲ μιάνῃς τὸ πνεῦμα οὐ ζήσῃ.

*[God will heal former sins of ignorance; if for the time to come the sinner defile neither flesh nor spirit.]*

*Sim. v. 7.*

[Funk, I. 464.]

Ἀλλὰ νῦν φύλασσε σεαυτόν, καὶ ὁ κύριος ὁ παντοκράτωρ, πολὺσπλαγχνος ὢν, περὶ τῶν προτέρων ἀγνοημάτων ἴασιν δώσει· ἐὰν τὸ λοιπὸν μὴ μιάνῃς σου τὴν σάρκα μηδὲ τὸ πνεῦμα· ἀμφότερά γὰρ κοινά ἐστι καὶ ἄτερ ἀλλήλων μιανθῆναι οὐ δύναται· Ἀμφότερά οὖν καθαρὰ φύλασσε, καὶ ζήσῃ τῷ θεῷ.

*[These commandments valuable to those who repent: without obedience to them repentance is vain.]*

*Sim. vi. 1.*

[Funk, I. 464.]

Αὗται αἱ ἐντολαὶ σύμφοροί εἰσι τοῖς μέλλουσι μετανοεῖν· ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ πορευθῶσιν ἐν αὐταῖς, εἰς μάτην ἐστὶν ἡ μετάνοια αὐτῶν. Οἱ οὖν μετανοοῦντες ἀποβάλλετε τὰς πονηρίας τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου τὰς ἐκτριβούσας ὑμᾶς· ἐνδυσάμενοι δὲ πᾶσαν ἀρετὴν δικαιοσύνης δυνήσεσθε τηρῆσαι τὰς ἐντολὰς ταύτας καὶ μηκέτι προστιθέναι ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν.

**Hermas.**

[For those who have added blasphemy to luxury there is no repentance unto life.]

Sim. vi. 2.

[Funk, I. 466.]

\*Ακουε, φησίν· ἃ εἶδες πρόβατα ἱλαρὰ καὶ σκιρτῶντα, οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἀπεσπασμένοι ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς τέλος καὶ παραδεδωκότες ἑαυτοὺς ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου. Ἐν τούτοις οὖν μετάνοια ζωῆς οὐκ ἔστιν ὅτι προσέθηκαν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις αὐτῶν καὶ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐβλασφήμησαν. Τῶν τοιούτων οὖν ὁ θάνατός ἐστιν.

[For those who without blasphemy have lived in luxury and deceit, penitence and life are open.]

Sim. vi. 2.

[Funk, I. 468.]

\*Α δὲ εἶδες πρόβατα μὴ σκιρτῶντα, ἀλλ' ἐν τόπῳ ἐνὶ βοσκόμενα, οὗτοι εἰσιν οἱ παραδεδωκότες μὲν ἑαυτοὺς ταῖς τρυφαῖς καὶ ἀπάταις, εἰς δὲ τὸν κύριον οὐδὲν ἐβλασφήμησαν. Οὗτοι οὖν κατεφθαρμένοι εἰσιν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας· ἐν τούτοις ἐλπίς ἐστι μετανοίας, ἐν ᾗ δύνανται ζῆσαι. Ἡ καταφθορὰ οὖν ἐλπίδα ἔχει ἀνανεώσεώς τινος, ὁ δὲ θάνατος ἀπώλειαν ἔχει αἰώνιον.

[The Angel of Punishment afflicts sinners with various punishments in the discipline of life ; and then delivers them to the Angel of Penitence for training.]

Sim. vi. 3.

[Funk, I. 468.]

Οὗτος, φησίν, ἐστὶν ὁ ἄγγελος τῆς τιμωρίας· ἐκ δὲ τῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν δικαίων ἐστί, κείμενος δὲ ἐπὶ τῆς τιμωρίας. Παραλαμβάνει οὖν τοὺς ἀποπλανωμένους ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πορευθέντας ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ ἀπάταις τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου καὶ τιμωρεῖ αὐτούς, καθὼς ἄξιοί εἰσι, δειναῖς καὶ ποικίλαις τιμωρίαις. Ἡθελον, φημί, κύριε, γνῶναι τὰς ποικίλας ταύτας τιμωρίας, ποταπαὶ εἰσιν. \*Ακουε, φησί, τὰς ποικίλας βασάνους καὶ τιμωρίας. Βιωτικά εἰσιν αἱ βάσανοι· τιμωροῦνται γὰρ οἱ μὲν ζημίαις, οἱ δὲ ὑστερήσειν, οἱ δὲ ἀσθενείαις ποικίλαις, οἱ δὲ πάσῃ ἀκαταστασίᾳ, οἱ δὲ ὑβριζόμεναι ὑπὸ ἀναξίων καὶ ἐτέραις πολλαῖς πράξεσι πάσχοντες· πολλοὶ γὰρ ἀκαταστατοῦντες ταῖς βουλαῖς αὐτῶν ἐπιβάλλονται πολλά, καὶ οὐδὲν αὐτοῖς ὅλως προχωρεῖ. Καὶ λέγουσιν ἑαυτοὺς μὴ εὐδοῦσθαι ἐν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτῶν, καὶ οὐκ ἀναβαίνει αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν, ὅτι ἔπραξαν πονηρὰ ἔργα, ἀλλ' αἰτιῶνται τὸν κύριον. Ὅταν οὖν θλιβῶσι πάσῃ θλίψει, τότε ἐμοὶ παραδίδονται εἰς ἀγαθὴν παιδείαν καὶ ἰσχυροποιοῦνται ἐν τῇ πίστει τοῦ κυρίου καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ζωῆς αὐτῶν δουλεύουσιν τῷ κυρίῳ ἐν καθαρᾷ καρδίᾳ [ἐὰν δὲ μετανοήσωσι, τότε ἀναβαίνει ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτῶν τὰ ἔργα ἃ ἔπραξαν πονηρὰ, καὶ τότε δοξάζουσι τὸν θεόν, λέγοντες ὅτι δίκαιος κριτὴς ἐστὶ καὶ δικαίως ἔπαθον ἕκαστος κατὰ τὰς πράξεις αὐτοῦ· δουλεύουσι δὲ λοιπὸν τῷ κυρίῳ ἐν καθαρᾷ καρδίᾳ] αὐτῶν καὶ εὐδοῦνται ἐν πάσῃ πράξει αὐτῶν, λαμβάνοντες παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου πάντα, ὅσα ἂν αἰτῶνται· καὶ τότε δοξάζουσι τὸν κύριον, ὅτι ἐμοὶ παρεδόθησαν, καὶ οὐκέτι οὐδὲν πάσχουσι τῶν πονηρῶν.



**Hermas.**

[For one day of luxury the torment is equivalent to one year.]

Sim. vi. 4.

[Funk, I. 470.]

Τῆς τρυφῆς καὶ ἀπάτης ὁ χρόνος ὥρα ἐστὶ μία· τῆς δὲ βασάνου ἡ ὥρα λ' ἡμερῶν δύναμιν ἔχει. Ἐὰν οὖν μίαν ἡμέραν τρυφήσῃ τις καὶ ἀπατηθῇ, μίαν δὲ ἡμέραν βασανισθῇ, ὅλον ἐνιαυτὸν ἰσχύει ἡ ἡμέρα τῆς βασάνου. Ὅσας οὖν ἡμέρας τρυφήσῃ τις, τοσούτους ἐνιαυτοὺς βασανίζεται. Βλέπεις οὖν, φησὶν, ὅτι τῆς τρυφῆς καὶ ἀπάτης ὁ χρόνος ἐλάχιστος ἐστὶ, τῆς δὲ τιμωρίας καὶ βασάνου πολὺς.

[Harmful indulgences which bring torment.]

Sim. vi. 5.

[Funk, I. 472.]

Ποῖαι, φημί, κύριε, τρυφαί εἰσι βλαβεραί; πᾶσι, φησί, πρᾶξις τρυφή ἐστὶ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, ὃ ἐὰν ἡδέως ποιῇ· καὶ γὰρ ὁ ὀξύχολος τῷ ἑαυτοῦ πάθει τὸ ἱκανὸν ποιῶν τρυφᾷ· καὶ ὁ μοιχὸς καὶ ὁ μέθυστος καὶ ὁ κατάλαλος καὶ ὁ ψεύστης καὶ ὁ πλεονέκτης καὶ ὁ αποστερητὴς καὶ ὁ τοῦτοις τὰ ὅμοια ποιῶν τῇ ἰδίᾳ νόσῳ τὸ ἱκανὸν ποιεῖ· τρυφᾷ οὖν ἐπὶ τῇ πράξει αὐτοῦ. Αὗται πᾶσαι αἱ τρυφαὶ βλαβεραί εἰσι τοῖς δούλοις τοῦ θεοῦ. Διὰ ταύτας οὖν τὰς ἀπάτας πάσχουσιν οἱ τιμωρούμενοι καὶ βασανιζόμενοι.

αἱ δὲ βλαβεραὶ τρυφαὶ αἱ προειρημέναι βασάνους καὶ τιμωρίας αὐτοῖς περιποιοῦνται· ἐὰν δὲ ἐπιμένωσι καὶ μὴ μετανοήσωσι, θάνατον ἑαυτοῖς περιποιοῦνται.

[Repentance from the heart not alone sufficient: there must be endurance of affliction.]

Sim. vii. 4.

[Funk, I. 474.]

Ἄλλ' ἰδοὺ, φημί, κύριε, μεταμενοήκασιν ἐξ ὅλης καρδίας αὐτῶν. Οἶδα, φησί, καὶ γὰρ, ὅτι μεταμενοήκασιν ἐξ ὅλης καρδίας αὐτῶν· τῶν οὖν μετανοούντων δοκεῖς τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἀφίεσθαι; Οὐ παντελῶς· ἀλλὰ δεῖ τὸν μετανοοῦντα βασανίσαι τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν καὶ ταπεινοφρονῆσαι ἐν πάσῃ πράξει αὐτοῦ ἰσχυρῶς καὶ θλιβῆναι ἐν πάσαις θλίψεσι ποικίλαις· καὶ ἐὰν ὑπενέγκῃ τὰς θλίψεις τὰς ἐπερχομένας αὐτῷ, πάντως σπλαγχνισθήσεται ὁ τὰ πάντα κτίσας καὶ ἐνδυναμώσας καὶ ἱασίν τινα δώσει αὐτῷ καὶ τοῦτο πάντως ἐὰν ἴδῃ τὴν καρδίαν τοῦ μετανοοῦντος καθαρὰν ἀπὸ παντὸς πονηροῦ πράγματος. Σοὶ δὲ συμφέρον ἐστὶ καὶ τῷ οἰκῷ σου νῦν θλιβῆναι. Τί δέ σοι πολλὰ λέγω; Θλιβῆναι σε δεῖ, καθὼς προσέταξεν ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου ἐκείνος, ὁ παραδιδούς σε ἐμοί· καὶ τοῦτο, εὐχαρίστει τῷ κυρίῳ, ὅτι ἄξιόν σε ἡγήσατο τοῦ προδηλῶσαί σοι τὴν θλίψιν ἵνα προγνοὺς αὐτὴν ὑπενέγκῃς ἰσχυρῶς.

[The glorious Angel Michael, who governs the faithful, retains

**Hermas.**

*those who have not transgressed : but those who have transgressed he commits to the Angel of Penitence that they may repent.]*

*Sim. viii. 3.*

[Funk, I. 484.]

Λέγω αὐτῷ· κύριε, διατί οὓς μὲν ἀπέλυσεν εἰς τὸν πύργον, οὓς δὲ σοὶ κατέλειψεν ; Ὅσοι, φησί, παρέβησαν τὸν νόμον, ὃν ἔλαβον παρ' αὐτοῦ, εἰς τὴν ἔμην ἐξουσίαν κατέλιπεν αὐτοὺς εἰς μετάνοιαν· ὅσοι δὲ ἤδη εὐηρέστησαν τῷ νόμῳ καὶ τετηρήκασιν αὐτόν, ὑπὸ τὴν ἰδίαν ἐξουσίαν ἔχει αὐτούς.

*[The Lord gives penitence to those who will fitly respond, to others not. Apostates perish from God. In the parable none of these repent. Strange teachers who hinder the servants of God from repentance. Many have repented, and will yet repent. Repentance brings life ; non-repentance death.]*

*Sim. viii. 6.*

[Funk, I. 488.]

Μετὰ τὸ πάντων κατανοῆσαι τὰς ῥάβδους τὸν ποιμένα λέγει μοι· Εἶπον σοι ὅτι τὸ δένδρον τοῦτο φιλόζωόν ἐστι. Βλέπεις, φησί, πόσοι μετενόησαν καὶ ἐσώθησαν ; Βλέπω, φημί, κύριε. Ἵνα ἴδῃς, φησί, τὴν πολυευσπλαγχνίαν τοῦ κυρίου, ὅτι μεγάλη καὶ ἔνδοξός ἐστι· καὶ ἔδωκε πνεῦμα τοῖς ἀξίοις οὗσι μετανοίας. Διατί, οὖν, φημί, κύριε, πάντες οὐ μετενόησαν ; Ὡν εἶδε, φησί, τὴν καρδίαν μέλλουσιν καθαρὰν γενέσθαι καὶ δουλεύειν αὐτῷ ἐξ ὅλης καρδίας, τούτοις ἔδωκε τὴν μετάνοιαν· ὧν δὲ εἶδε τὴν δολιότητα καὶ πονηρίαν, μελλόντων ἐν ὑποκρίσει μετανοεῖν, ἐκείνοις οὐκ ἔδωκε μετάνοιαν, μήποτε πάλιν βεβηλώσωσι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ. Λέγω αὐτῷ· κύριε, νῦν οὖν μοι δῆλωσον τοὺς τὰς ῥάβδους ἐπιδεδωκότας, ποταπὸς τις αὐτῶν ἐστί, καὶ τὴν τούτων κατοικίαν, ἵνα ἀκούσαντες οἱ πιστεύσαντες καὶ εἰληφότες τὴν σφραγίδα καὶ τεθλακότες αὐτὴν καὶ μὴ τηρήσαντες ὑγίη, ἐπιγνόντες τὰ ἐαυτῶν ἔργα μετανοήσωσι, λαβόντες ὑπὸ σοῦ σφραγίδα, καὶ δοξάσωσι τὸν κύριον, ὅτι ἐσπλαγχνίσθη ἐπ' αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀπεστείλε σε τοῦ ἀνακαινίσαι τὰ πνεύματα αὐτῶν.

Ἄκουε, φησίν, ὧν αἱ ῥάβδοι ξηραὶ καὶ βεβρωμένοι ὑπὸ σπητὸς εὐρέθησαν, οὗτοι εἰσιν οἱ ἀποστάται καὶ προδόται τῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ βλασφημήσαντες ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις αὐτῶν τὸν κύριον, ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἐπαισχυνθέντες τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου τὸ ἐπικληθὲν ἐπ' αὐτούς· οὗτοι οὖν εἰς τέλος ἀπώλοντο τῷ θεῷ. Βλέπεις δέ ὅτι οὐδὲ εἰς αὐτῶν μετενόησε, καίπερ ἀκούσαντες τὰ ῥήματα, ἃ ἐλάλησας αὐτοῖς, ἃ σοι ἐνετειλάμην· ἀπὸ τῶν τοιούτων ἡ ζωὴ ἄπεστιν. Οἱ δὲ τὰς ξηρὰς καὶ ἀσήπτους ἐπιδεδωκότες, καὶ οὗτοι ἐγγὺς αὐτῶν ἦσαν γὰρ ὑποκριταὶ καὶ διδαχὰς ξένας εἰσφέροντες καὶ ἐκστρέφοντες τοὺς δούλους τοῦ θεοῦ, μάλιστα δὲ τοὺς ἡμαρτηκότας, μὴ ἀφιέντες μετανοεῖν αὐτούς, ἀλλὰ ταῖς διδαχαῖς ταῖς μωραῖς πείθοντες αὐτούς· οὗτοι οὖν ἔχουσιν ἐλπίδα τοῦ μετανοῆσαι. Βλέπεις δὲ πολλοὺς ἐξ αὐτῶν καὶ μετανοήσαντας, ἀφ' ἧς ἐλάλησας αὐτοῖς τὰς ἐντολάς μου· καὶ ἔτι μετανοήσουσιν. Ὅσοι δὲ οὐ μετανοήσουσιν, ἀπώλεσαν τὴν ζωὴν αὐτῶν· ὅσοι δὲ μετανόησαν ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀγαθοὶ ἐγένοντο, καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ κατοικία αὐτῶν εἰς τὰ τεῖχη τὰ πρῶτα· τινὲς δὲ καὶ εἰς τὸν πύργον ἀνέβησαν. Βλέπεις



**Hermas.**

οὖν, φησὶν, ὅτι ἡ μετάνοια ἡ τῶν ἀμαρτωλῶν ζωὴν ἔχει, τὸ δὲ μὴ μετανοῆσαι θάνατον.

[Uncertain and slanderous persons who make dissension. They may repent, and find acceptance in the tower or within the walls. If they do not repent they perish.]

Sim. viii. 7.

[Funk, I. 490.]

Οἱ δὲ ἡμιζήρους ἔχοντες, καὶ ἐν αὐταῖς σχισμάς, οὗτοι καὶ δίψυχοι καὶ κατάλαοί εἰσι καὶ μηδέποτε εἰρηνεύοντες ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, ἀλλὰ διχοστατοῦντες πάντοτε· ἀλλὰ καὶ τούτοις, φησὶν, ἐπίκειται μετάνοια. Βλέπεις, φησί, τινὰς ἐξ αὐτῶν μετανεοηκότας· καὶ ἔτι, φησὶν, ἐστὶν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐλπίς μετανοίας. Καὶ ὅσοι, φησὶν, ἐξ αὐτῶν μετανεοήκασιν, τὴν κατοικίαν εἰς τὸν πύργον ἔχουσιν· ὅσοι δὲ ἐξ αὐτῶν βραδύτερον μετανεοήκασιν, εἰς τὰ τεῖχη κατοικήσουσιν· ὅσοι δὲ οὐ μετανοοῦσιν, ἀλλ' ἐμμένουσι ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτῶν, θανάτῳ ἀποθανοῦνται.

[Of those who lived with the heathen some did not depart from God. To such repentance is open, but it must be speedy, that they may dwell in the tower.]

Sim. viii. 9.

[Funk, I. 495.]

ἀλλὰ μετὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν συνέζησαν καὶ αὕτη ἡ ὁδὸς ἡδυτέρα αὐτοῖς ἐγένετο· ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἀπέστησαν, ἀλλ' ἐνέμειναν τῇ πίστει, μὴ ἐργαζόμενοι τὰ ἔργα τῆς πίστεως. Πολλοὶ οὖν ἐξ αὐτῶν μετενόησαν, καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ κατοίκησις αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ πύργῳ. Ἅλλοι δὲ εἰς τέλος μετὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν συζῶντες καὶ πειθόμενοι ταῖς κενοδοξίαις τῶν ἐθνῶν ἀπέστησαν ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, δουλεύοντες ταῖς πράξεσι καὶ τοῖς ἔργοις τῶν ἐθνῶν. Οὗτοι μετὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν ἐλογίσθησαν. Ἅλλοι δὲ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐδιψύχησαν μὴ ἐλπίζοντες σωθῆναι διὰ τὰς πράξεις αἷς ἔπραξαν· ἄλλοι δὲ ἐδιψύχησαν καὶ σχίσματα ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἐποίησαν· τούτοις οὖν τοῖς διψυχήσασιν διὰ τὰς πράξεις αὐτῶν μετάνοια ἔτι ἐστίν· ἀλλ' ἡ μετάνοια αὐτῶν ταχινὴ ὀφείλει εἶναι, ἵνα ἡ κατοικία αὐτῶν γένηται εἰς τὸν πύργον· τῶν δὲ μὴ μετανοούντων, ἀλλ' ἐπιμενόντων ταῖς ἡδοναῖς, ὁ θάνατος ἐγγύς.

[Hermas to announce this to all that they may repent. They shall then live to God. The Angel is sent by God to give penitence (μετάνοιαν).]

Sim. viii. 11.

[Funk, I. 496.]

Καὶ μετὰ τὸ συντελέσαι αὐτὸν τὰς ἐπιλύσεις πασῶν τῶν ῥάβδων λέγει μοι· Ὑπάγε καὶ πᾶσιν λέγε, ἵνα μετανοήσωσιν καὶ ζήσονται τῷ θεῷ· ὅτι ὁ κύριος ἐπεμψέ με σπλαγχνισθεὶς πᾶσι δοῦναι τὴν μετάνοιαν, καίπερ τινῶν μὴ ὄντων ἀξίων διὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν· ἀλλὰ μακρόθυμος ὢν ὁ κύριος θέλει τὴν κλῆσιν τὴν γενομένην διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ σώζεσθαι. Λέγω αὐτῷ· κύριε, ἐλπίζω, ὅτι πάντες ἀκούσαντες αὐτὰ μετανοήσουσι· πείθομαι γάρ, ὅτι εἰς ἕκαστος τὰ ἴδια ἔργα ἐπιγνούς καὶ φοβηθεὶς τὸν θεὸν μετανοήσει. Ἀποκριθεὶς μοι λέγει.

**Hermas.**

Ὅσοι φησὶν ἐξ ὅλης καρδίας αὐτῶν [μετανοήσωσι καὶ] καθαρίσωσιν ἑαυτοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν πονηριῶν πασῶν τῶν προειρημένων καὶ μηκέτι μηδὲν προσθῶσι ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις αὐτῶν, λήψονται ἱασιν παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου τῶν προτέρων ἁμαρτιῶν, ἐὰν μὴ διψυχήσωσιν ἐπὶ ταῖς ἐντολαῖς ταύταις, καὶ ζήσονται τῷ θεῷ. [Ὅσοι δέ, φησὶν, προσθῶσι ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις αὐτῶν καὶ πορευθῶσιν ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου, θανάτῳ ἑαυτοὺς κατακρίνουσιν] Σὺ δὲ πορεύου ἐν ταῖς ἐντολαῖς μου, καὶ ζήσῃ [τῷ θεῷ· καὶ ὅσοι ἂν πορευθῶσιν ἐν αὐταῖς καὶ ἐργάσωνται ὀρθῶς, ζήσονται τῷ θεῷ]. Ταῦτά μοι δείξας καὶ λαλήσας πάντα λέγει μοι. Τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ σοι δείξω μετ' ὀλίγας ἡμέρας.

[The tower will not be completed till the coming of the Lord, who may change the stones.]

Sim. ix. 5.

[Funk, I. 508.]

Οὕπω, φησί, δύναται ἀποτελεσθῆναι ὁ πύργος, ἐὰν μὴ ἔλθῃ ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ καὶ δοκιμάσῃ τὴν οἰκοδομὴν ταύτην, ἵνα, ἐάν τινες λίθοι σαπροὶ εὑρεθῶσιν ἀλλάξῃ αὐτούς· πρὸς γὰρ τὸ ἐκείνου θέλημα οἰκοδομεῖται ὁ πύργος.

[The men who sought after the beautiful women clothed in black shall, if they repent, be admitted into the house of God. The Lord has sent to us the Angel of Penitence.]

Sim. ix. 14.

[Funk, I. 526.]

Τί οὖν, φημί, κύριε, ἐὰν οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι, τοιοῦτοι ὄντες, μετανοήσωσι καὶ ἀποβάλωσι τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν τῶν γυναικῶν τούτων καὶ ἐπανακάμψωσιν ἐπὶ τὰς παρθένους καὶ ἐν τῇ δυνάμει αὐτῶν καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτῶν πορευθῶσιν, οὐκ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ; Εἰσελεύσονται, φησὶν, ἐὰν τούτων τῶν γυναικῶν ἀποβάλωσι τὰ ἔργα, τῶν δὲ παρθένων ἀναλάβωσι τὴν δύναμιν καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτῶν πορευθῶσι· διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ τῆς οἰκοδομῆς ἀνοχὴ ἐγένετο, ἵνα, ἐὰν μετανοήσωσιν οὗτοι εἰσέλθωσιν εἰς τὴν οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ πύργου. Ἐὰν δὲ μὴ μετανοήσουσι, τότε ἄλλοι εἰσελεύσονται καὶ οὗτοι εἰς τέλος ἐκβληθήσονται. Ἐπὶ τούτοις πᾶσιν ἡὐχαρίστησα τῷ κυρίῳ, ὅτι ἐσπλαγχνίσθη ἐπὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξαπέστειλε τὸν ἄγγελον τῆς μετάνοίας εἰς ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἁμαρτήσαντας εἰς αὐτὸν καὶ ἀνεκαίνεσεν ἡμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἤδη κατεφθαρμένων ἡμῶν καὶ μὴ ἐχόντων ἐλπίδα τοῦ ζῆν ἀνενέωσε τὴν ζωὴν ἡμῶν.

[The names of the women clothed in black.]

Sim. ix. 15.

[Funk, I. 528.]

Ἄκουε, φησί, καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα τῶν γυναικῶν τῶν τὰ ἱμάτια μέλανα ἔχουσῶν. Καὶ ἐκ τούτων δ' εἰσὶ δυνατώτεραι· ἡ πρώτη Ἀπιστία, ἡ δευτέρα Ἀκρασία, ἡ δὲ τρίτη Ἀπείθεια, ἡ δὲ τετάρτη Ἀπάτη. Αἱ δὲ ἀκόλουθοι αὐτῶν καλοῦνται Λύπη, Πονηρία, Ἀσέλγεια, Ὁξυχολία, Ψεῦδος, Ἀφροσύνη, Καταλαλιά, Μίσος. Ταῦτα τὰ ὀνόματα ὁ φορῶν τοῦ θεοῦ δούλος τὴν βασιλείαν μὲν ὄψεται τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰς αὐτὴν δὲ οὐκ εἰσελεύσεται.



**Hermas.**

[*To apostates, blasphemers, betrayers of the brethren, repentance is not open. To hypocrites and teachers of wickedness repentance is open.*]

*Sim. ix. 19.*

[Funk, I. 536.]

Ἐκ τοῦ πρώτου ὅρους τοῦ μέλανος οἱ πιστεύσαντες τοιοῦτοί εἰσιν· ἀποστάτοι καὶ βλάσφημοι εἰς τὸν κύριον καὶ προδότηι τῶν δούλων τοῦ θεοῦ. Τούτοις δὲ μετάνοια οὐκ ἔστι, θάνατος δὲ ἔστι, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ μέλανές εἰσι· καὶ γὰρ τὸ γένος αὐτῶν ἄνομόν ἐστιν. Ἐκ δὲ τοῦ δευτέρου ὅρους τοῦ φιλοῦ οἱ πιστεύσαντες τοιοῦτοί εἰσιν· ὑποκριταὶ καὶ διδάσκαλοι πονηρίας. Καὶ οὗτοι οὖν τοῖς προτέροις ὅμοιοι εἰσι, μὴ ἔχοντες καρπὸν δικαιοσύνης· ὥς γὰρ τὸ ὅρος αὐτῶν ἄκαρπον, οὕτω καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι οἱ τοιοῦτοί ὄνομα μὲν ἔχουσιν, ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς πίστεως κενοὶ εἰσι καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐν αὐτοῖς καρπὸς ἀληθείας. Τούτοις οὖν μετάνοια κεῖται· ἐὰν ταχὺ μετανοήσωσιν· ἐὰν δὲ βραδύνωσι μετὰ τῶν προτέρων ἔσται ὁ θάνατος αὐτῶν. Διὰ τί, φημί, κύριε, τούτοις μετάνοιά ἐστι, τοῖς δὲ προτέροις οὐκ ἔστι; Παρά τι γὰρ αἱ αὐταὶ αἱ πράξεις αὐτῶν εἰσὶ Διὰ τοῦτο, φησί, τούτοις μετάνοια κεῖται, ὅτι οὐκ ἐβλάσφημησαν τὸν κύριον αὐτῶν οὐδὲ ἐγένοντο προδότηι τῶν δούλων τοῦ θεοῦ, διὰ δὲ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν τοῦ λήμματος ὑπεκρίθησαν καὶ ἐδίδαξαν κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἁμαρτανόντων. Ἀλλὰ τίσουσι δίκην τινά· κεῖται δὲ αὐτοῖς μετάνοια διὰ τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι αὐτοὺς βλασφήμους μηδὲ προδότας.

[*To those choked by riches or much business repentance is open.*]

*Sim. ix. 20.*

[Funk, I. 538.]

οἱ μὲν τρίβολοί εἰσιν οἱ πλούσιοι, αἱ δὲ ἄκανθαι οἱ ἐν ταῖς πραγματείαις ταῖς ποικίλαις ἐμπεφυρμένοι . . . Ἀλλὰ τούτοις πᾶσι μετάνοιά ἐστι, ταχινὴ δέ, ἢ ὃ τοῖς προτέροις χρόνοις οὐκ εἰργάσαντο, νῦν αναδράμωσιν ταῖς ἡμέραις καὶ ἀγαθὸν τι ποιήσωσιν.

[*Of waverers, neither living nor dead. Such under persecution worship idols. Repentance open to waverers.*]

*Sim. ix. 21.*

[Funk, I. 540.]

Ὅμοιοι οὖν εἰσὶ τοῖς διψύχοις· καὶ γὰρ οἱ δίψυχοι οὔτε χλωροὶ εἰσιν οὔτε ξηροί· οὔτε γὰρ ζῶσιν οὔτε τεθνήκασιν. Ὡς περ γὰρ αὐτῶν αἱ βοτάναι ἥλιον ἰδοῦσαι ἐξηράνθησαν, οὕτω καὶ οἱ δίψυχοι, ὅταν θλίψιν ἀκούσωσι, διὰ τὴν δειλίαν αὐτῶν εἰδωλολατροῦσι καὶ τὸ ὄνομα ἐπαισχύνονται τοῦ κυρίου αὐτῶν. Οἱ τοιοῦτοί οὖν οὔτε ζῶσιν οὔτε τεθνήκασιν. Ἀλλὰ καὶ οὗτοι ἐὰν ταχὺ μετανοήσωσιν, δυνήσονται ζῆσαι· ἐὰν δὲ μὴ μετανοήσωσιν, ἤδη παραδεδομένοι εἰσὶ ταῖς γυναιξὶ ταῖς ἀποφερομέναις τὴν ζωὴν αὐτῶν.

[*Repentance open to unconscientious ministers, who have otherwise no hope of life.*]

*Sim. ix. 26.*

[Funk, I. 544.]

Ἐκ δὲ τοῦ ὅρους τοῦ ἐνάτου τοῦ ἐρημώδους, τοῦ [τὰ] ἐρπετὰ καὶ θηρία

**Hermas.**

ἐν αὐτῷ ἔχοντος τὰ διαφθείροντα τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, οἱ πιστεύσαντες τοιοῦτοί εἰσιν· Οἱ μὲν τοὺς σπίλους ἔχοντες διάκονοι εἰσι κακῶς διακονήσαντες καὶ διαρπάσαντες χηρῶν καὶ ὀρφανῶν τὴν ζωὴν καὶ ἑαυτοῖς περιποιησάμενοι ἐκ τῆς διακονίας ἧς ἔλαβον διακονῆσαι· ἐὰν οὖν ἐπιμείνωσι τῇ αὐτῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ, ἀπέθανον καὶ οὐδεμία αὐτοῖς ἐλπίς ζωῆς· ἐὰν δὲ ἐπιστρέψωσι καὶ ἀγνῶς τελειώσωσι τὴν διακονίαν αὐτῶν, δυνήσονται ζῆσαι.

*[Those who have denied their Lord, but not from the heart, have repentance open. In the present none who intend to deny the Lord can be saved.]*

*Sim. ix. 26.*

*[Funk, I. 546.]*

Οἱ δὲ ἐψωριακότες οὗτοι οἱ ἀρνησάμενοί εἰσι καὶ μὴ ἐπιστρέψαντες ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον ἑαυτῶν.

Τούτοις οὖν μετάνοια γίνεται, ἐὰν μὴ ἐκ καρδίας εὐρεθῶσιν ἡρνημένοι· ἐὰν δὲ ἐκ καρδίας εὐρεθῇ ἡρνημένος τις, οὐκ οἶδα, εἰ δύναται ζῆσαι. Καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ εἰς ταύτας τὰς ἡμέρας λέγω, ἵνα τις ἀρνησάμενος μετάνοιαν λάβῃ· ἀδύνατον γάρ ἐστι σωθῆναι τὸν μέλλοντα νῦν ἀρνεῖσθαι τὸν κύριον ἑαυτοῦ· ἀλλ' ἐκείνοις τοῖς πάλαι ἡρνημένοις δοκεῖ κεῖσθαι μετάνοια. Εἴ τις οὖν μέλλει μετανοεῖν, ταχινὸς γενέσθω πρὶν τὸν πύργον ἀποτελεσθῆναι· εἰ δέ μή, ὑπὸ τῶν γυναικῶν καταφθαρήσεται εἰς θάνατον.

*[The inferior merit of confessors who have weighed the possibility of denial.]*

*Sim. ix. 28.*

*[Funk, I. 548.]*

Ὅσοι, φησὶν, ἐπ' ἐξουσίαν ἀχθέντες ἐξητάσθησαν καὶ οὐκ ἡρνήσαντο, ἀλλ' ἔπαθον προθύμως, οὗτοι μᾶλλον ἐνδοξότεροί εἰσι παρὰ τῷ κυρίῳ· τούτων ὁ καρπὸς ἐστὶν ὁ ὑπερέχων. Ὅσοι δὲ δειλοὶ καὶ ἐν δισταγμῷ ἐγένοντο καὶ ἐλογίσαντο ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, πότερον ἀρνήσονται ἢ ὁμολογήσουσι, καὶ ἔπαθον, τούτων οἱ καρποὶ ἐλάττους εἰσίν, ὅτι ἀνέβη ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτῶν ἡ βουλὴ αὕτη· πονηρὰ γὰρ ἡ βουλὴ αὕτη, ἵνα δοῦλος κύριον ἴδιον ἀρνήσῃται.

*[Christians who have sinned are happy if they suffer for the name of the Lord. The Lord grants them life ; who otherwise would have died to God.]*

*Sim. ix. 28.*

*[Funk, I. 550.]*

[Οὐκοῦν μακαρίζετε ἑαυτούς· ἀλλὰ δοκεῖτε ἔργον μέγα πεποιηκέναι, ἐὰν τις ὑμῶν διὰ τὸν θεὸν πάθῃ. Ζωὴν ὑμῖν ὁ κύριος χαρίζεται καὶ οὐ νοεῖτε· αἱ γὰρ ἁμαρτίαι ὑμῶν κατεβάρησαν, καὶ εἰ μὴ πεπόνθατε ἕνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματος κυρίου, διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ὑμῶν τεθνήκειτε [ἀν] τῷ θεῷ.]



**Hermas.**

[*Do good works lest the tower be finished, and ye be excluded.*]

*Sim. x. 4.*

[Funk, I. 562.]

Facite igitur opera bona, quicumque accepistis a Domino, ne dum tardatis facere, consummetur structura turris. Propter vos enim intermissum est opus ædificationis ejus. Nisi festinetis igitur facere recte, consummabitur turris et excludemini.

[*The leaders of the revolt to submit themselves to the presbyters, and to be disciplined to penitence.*]

**S. Clemens Romanus (c. A.D. 96).**

*Epistle to the Corinthians.*

[Lightfoot, *Apost. Fathers*, Pt. I. vol. ii. 165;

C. 57.

Migne, *P. L.*, I. 323.]

Ὑμεῖς οὖν, οἱ τὴν καταβολὴν τῆς στάσεως ποιήσαντες, ὑποτάγητε τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις καὶ παιδεύθητε εἰς μετάνοιαν, κάμψαντες τὰ γόνατα τῆς καρδίας ὑμῶν· μάθετε ὑποτάσσεσθαι, ἀποθέμενοι τὴν ἀλάζονα καὶ ὑπερήφανον τῆς γλώσσης ὑμῶν αὐθάδειαν· ἄμεινον γάρ ἐστιν ὑμῖν, ἐν τῷ ποιμνίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ μικροὺς καὶ ἐλλογίμους εὐρεθῆναι, ἢ καθ' ὑπεροχὴν δοκοῦντας ἐκριφῆναι ἐκ τῆς ἐλπίδος αὐτοῦ.

[*Passages with some reference to penitence.*]

C. 2.

[Lightfoot, 17.]

ἐξετείνετε τὰς χεῖρας ὑμῶν πρὸς τὸν παντοκράτορα θεόν, ἱκετεύοντες αὐτὸν ἰλεως γενέσθαι, εἰ τι ἄκοντες ἡμάρτετε.

C. 7.

[Lightfoot, 36.]

Ἀτενίσωμεν εἰς τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ γινώμεν ὥς ἐστιν τίμιον τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν ἐκχυθὲν, παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ μετανοίας χάριν ὑπήνεγκεν.

C. 8.

[Lightfoot, 41.]

Πάντας οὖν τοὺς ἀγαπητοὺς αὐτοῦ βουλόμενος μετανοίας μετασχεῖν ἐστήριξεν τῷ παντοκρατορικῷ βουλήματι αὐτοῦ.

[*The employment by S. Ignatius of the words μετανοεῖν and μετάνοια.*]

**S. Ignatius of Antioch (c. A.D. 112).**

*Epistle to the Ephesians.*

C. x. 1. [Lightfoot, *Apost. Fathers*, Pt. II. vol. ii. sec. 1, 57.]

Καὶ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἄλλων δὲ ἀνθρώπων ἀδιαλείπτως προσεύχεσθε· ἔστιν γὰρ [ἐν] αὐτοῖς ἐλπίς μετανοίας, ἵνα Θεοῦ τύχωσιν.

**S. Ignatius of Antioch.***Epistle to the Philadelphians.*

C. iii. 2.

[Lightfoot, 256.]

ὅσοι γὰρ Θεοῦ εἰσιν καὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, οὗτοι μετὰ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου εἰσίν· καὶ ὅσοι ἂν μετανοήσαντες ἔλθωσιν ἐπὶ τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς ἐκκλησίας, καὶ οὗτοι Θεοῦ ἔσονται, ἵνα ὦσιν κατὰ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ζῶντες.

C. viii. 1.

[Lightfoot, 269.]

Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν τὸ ἴδιον ἐποίουν ὡς ἄνθρωπος εἰς ἔνωσην κατηρτισμένος. οὐ δὲ μερισμός ἐστιν καὶ ὀργή, Θεὸς οὐ κατοικεῖ. πᾶσιν οὖν μετανοοῦσιν ἀφίει ὁ Κύριος, ἂν μετανοήσωσιν εἰς ἐνότητα Θεοῦ καὶ συνέδριον τοῦ ἐπισκόπου.

*Epistle to the Smyrnaeans.*

C. iv. 1.

[Lightfoot, 298.]

Ταῦτα δὲ παραινῶ ὑμῖν, ἀγαπητοί, εἰδὼς ὅτι καὶ ὑμεῖς οὕτως ἔχετε· προφυλάσσω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τῶν θηρίων τῶν ἀνθρωπομόρφων, οὓς οὐ μόνον δεῖ ὑμᾶς μὴ παραδέχεσθαι, ἀλλ', εἰ δυνατόν, μηδὲ συναντᾶν [αὐτοῖς]· μόνον δὲ προσεύχεσθε ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν, ἵνα πὼς μετανοήσωσιν, ὅπερ δύσκολον· τούτου δὲ ἔχει ἐξουσίαν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, τὸ ἀληθινὸν ἡμῶν ζῆν.

C. v. 3.

[Lightfoot, 302.]

τὰ δὲ ὀνόματα αὐτῶν, ὄντα ἄπιστα, οὐκ ἔδοξέν μοι ἐγγράψαι· ἀλλὰ μηδὲ γένοιτό μοι αὐτῶν μνημονεύειν, μέχρις οὗ μετανοήσωσιν εἰς τὸ πάθος, ὃ ἐστὶν ἡμῶν ἀνάστασις.

C. ix. 1.

[Lightfoot, 314.]

Εὐλογον ἐστὶν λοιπὸν ἀνανῆψαι ἡμᾶς, ὡς [ἔτι] καιρὸν ἔχομεν εἰς Θεὸν μετανοεῖν. Καλῶς ἔχει Θεὸν καὶ ἐπίσκοπον εἰδέναι.

[*The presbyters exercise some prerogative of judgment.*]

**S. Polycarp of Smyrna (bp. c. A.D. 110).***Epistle to the Philippians.*C. vi. [Lightfoot, *Apost. Fathers*, Pt. II. vol. ii. sec. 2, 916.]

Καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι δὲ εὖσπλαγχνοι, εἰς πάντας ἐλεήμονες, ἐπιστρέφοντες τὰ ἀποπεπλανημένα, ἐπισκεπτόμενοι πάντας ἀσθενεῖς, μὴ ἀμελοῦντες χήρας ἢ ὀρφανοῦ ἢ πένητος, ἀλλὰ προνοοῦντες αἰὲ τοῦ καλοῦ ἐνώπιον Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων, ἀπεχόμενοι πάσης ὀργῆς, προσωποληψίας, κρίσεως ἀδίκου, μακρὰν ὄντες πάσης φιλαργυρίας, μὴ ταχέως πιστεύοντες κατὰ τινος, μὴ ἀπότομοι ἐν κρίσει, εἰδότες ὅτι πάντες ὀφειλέται ἐσμὲν ἁμαρτίας.

[*References to confession of sin.*]

**Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (Didache).**

C. iv.

[Funk, I. clii.]

Ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐξομολογήσῃ τὰ παραπτώματα σου, καὶ οὐ προσελεύσῃ ἐπὶ προσευχὴν σου ἐν συνειδήσει πονηρᾷ.



**Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (Didache).**

C. xiv.

[Funk, I. clxx.]

Κατὰ κυριακὴν δέ Κυρίου συναχθέντες κλάσατε ἄρτον καὶ εὐχαριστήσατε προσεξομολογησάμενοι τὰ παραπτώματα ὑμῶν, ὅπως καθαρὰ ἡ θυσία ὑμῶν ᾗ.

[*Importance of repentance for sins of lust. Almsgiving more potent as a penance than fasting or prayer.*]

**An ancient Homily (formerly known as the Second Epistle of S. Clement).**

C. xvi.

[Lightfoot, *Apost. Fathers*, Pt. I. vol. ii. 250.]

Ὡστε, ἀδελφοί, ἀφορμὴν λαβόντες οὐ μικρὰν εἰς τὸ μετανοῆσαι, καιρὸν ἔχοντες ἐπιστρέψωμεν ἐπὶ τὸν καλέσαντα ἡμᾶς Θεόν, ἕως ἔτι ἔχομεν τὸν παραδεχόμενον ἡμᾶς. ἐὰν γὰρ ταῖς ἡδυπαθείαις ταύταις ἀποταξώμεθα καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν νικήσωμεν ἐν τῷ μὴ ποιεῖν τὰς ἐπιθυμίας αὐτῆς τὰς πονηράς, μεταληψόμεθα τοῦ ἐλέους Ἰησοῦ. Γινώσκετε δὲ ὅτι ἔρχεται ἡδὴ ἡ ἡμέρα τῆς κρίσεως ὡς κλίβανος καιόμενος, καὶ τακῆσονται τινες τῶν οὐρανῶν, καὶ πάντα ἡ γῆ ὡς μόλιβος ἐπὶ πυρὶ τηκόμενος, καὶ τότε φανήσεται τὰ κρύφια καὶ φανερά ἔργα τῶν ἀνθρώπων. καλὸν οὖν ἐλεημοσύνη ὡς μετάνοια ἁμαρτίας· κρείσσων νηστεία προσευχῆς, ἐλεημοσύνη δὲ ἀμφοτέρων ἀγάπη δὲ καλύπτει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν· προσευχὴ δὲ ἐκ καλῆς συνειδήσεως ἐκ θανάτου ῥύεται. μακάριος πᾶς ὁ εὐρεθεὶς ἐν τούτοις πλήρης· ἐλεημοσύνη γὰρ κούφισμα ἁμαρτίας γίνεται.

**Notice of Cerdon (c. A.D. 135).**

[*Cerdon repeatedly made exomologesis in church at Rome.*]

**S. Irenæus, *Contra hæreses*.** (The Greek of this passage is known only from Eusebius, *H. E.*, IV. 11.)

III. iv. 3.

[Migne, *P. G.*, VII. 857.]

Κέρδων δὲ ὁ πρὸ Μαρκίωνος, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπὶ Ὑγίνου, ὃς ἦν ἑνατος ἐπίσκοπος, εἰς τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν ἔλθων, καὶ ἐξομολογούμενος, οὕτως διετέλεσε, ποτὲ μὲν λαθροδιδασκαλῶν, ποτὲ δὲ πάλιν ἐξομολογούμενος, ποτὲ δὲ ἐλεγχόμενος ἐφ' οἷς ἐδίδασκε κακῶς, καὶ ἀφιστάμενος τῆς τῶν ἀδελφῶν συνοδίας.

**Notices of Marcion (c. A.D. 141).**

[*Marcion, excommunicated by his father, the bishop of Sinope, arrives at Rome after the death of Hyginus, and seeks restoration from the presbyters of Rome.*]

**Epiphanius, *Adversus hæreses*.**42.<sup>1</sup>.[Migne, *P. G.*, XLI. 695.]

Οὗτος τὸ γένος Ποντικὸς ὑπῆρχεν, Ἐλενοπόντου δὲ φημι, Σινώπης δὲ πόλεως, ὡς πολλὸς περὶ αὐτοῦ ἄδεται λόγος. Τὸν δὲ πρῶτον αὐτοῦ βίον παρθενία· ᾗθεν ἥσκει μονάζων γὰρ ὑπῆρχε. καὶ υἱὸς ἐπισκόπου τῆς ἡμετέρας

**Epiphanius.**

ἀγίας καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Χρόνον δὲ προϊόντος προσφθείρεται παρθένω τινί, καὶ ἐξαπατήσας τὴν παρθένον, ἀπὸ τῆς ἐλπίδος αὐτὴν τε καὶ ἑαυτὸν κατέσπασε· καὶ τὴν φθορὰν ἀπεργασάμενος ἐξεοὔται τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὑπὸ τοῦ ἰδίου πατρός. Ἦν γὰρ αὐτοῦ ὁ πατήρ δι' ὑπερβολὴν εὐλαβείας τῶν διαφανῶν καὶ σφόδρα τῆς ἀληθείας ἐπιμελομένων, διαπρέπων ἐν τῇ τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς λειτουργίᾳ. Πολλὰ δῆθεν ὁ Μαρκίων καθικετεύσας, καὶ αἰτήσας μετάνοιαν, οὐκ εἴληφε παρὰ τοῦ ἰδίου πατρός. Πόνος γὰρ εἶχε τὸν ἀξιόλογον γέροντα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον, ὅτι οὐ μόνον ἐξέπεσεν ἐκεῖνος, ἀλλ' ὅτι καὶ αὐτῷ τὸ αἷσχος ἔφερεν. Ὡς τοίνυν οὐκ ἔτυχε παρ' αὐτοῦ διὰ τῆς κολακείας ὧν ἐδέετο, μὴ φέρων τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν πολλῶν χλεύην, ἀποδιδράσκει τῆς πόλεως τῆς αὐτῆς, καὶ ἄνεισιν εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην αὐτὴν μετὰ τὸ τελευτῆσαι Ὑγῖνον τὸν ἐπίσκοπον Ῥώμης. Οὗτος δὲ ἕνατος ἦν ἀπὸ Πέτρου καὶ Παύλου τῶν ἀποστόλων· καὶ τοῖς ἔτι πρεσβύταις περιούσι, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν μαθητῶν τῶν ἀποστόλων ὁρμωμένοις συμβαλὼν, ἥτοι συναχθῆναι, καὶ οὐδεὶς αὐτῷ συγκεχώρηκε· ζήλω λοιπὸν ἐπαρθεὶς, ὥς οὐκ ἀπείληφε τὴν προεδρίαν τε καὶ τὴν εἴσδυσιν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐπινοεῖ ἑαυτῷ καὶ προσφεύγει τῇ τοῦ ἀπατεῶνος Κέρδωνος αἵρέσει.

[*Marcion. His sin and his exclusion from the communion of the Church.*]

**Pseudo-Tertullianus.**

*Liber de præscriptionibus adversus hæreticos.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 70.]

Post hunc discipulus ipsius emersit Marcion quidam nomine, ponticus genere, episcopi filius, propter stuprum cujusdam virginis ab Ecclesiæ communicatione abjectus.



## THE SUB-APOSTOLIC PERIOD

### (a) *The Shepherd of Hermas*

FOR the student of Penance by far the most important of the non-canonical writings of the sub-Apostolic period is the *Shepherd of Hermas*. Alone among such writings it has for its main theme the subject of the penitence of Christians for sins committed after Baptism. It claims to be a revelation of a present offer of the remission of these sins under certain limitations and conditions. In the inquiry here undertaken the *Shepherd* calls for a somewhat detailed study.

The attitude of the Christian community towards sin after Baptism in the time of Hermas (c. A.D. 100) may be inferred from *Mand. iv. 3.<sup>1,2</sup>* Hermas notices two different kinds of contemporary teaching. "I have heard," he says to the Shepherd, the Angel of Penitence, "from certain teachers that there is no other repentance (μετάνοια) except that, when we went down into the water and received remission of our former sins." The Shepherd replied: "Thou hast well heard, for thus it is. For it was necessary that he who had received remission of sins should no longer sin, but abide in purity." Of another class of teachers the Shepherd can only speak in terms of reprobation. In *Sim. viii. 6* he describes those who gave in their branches withered and undecayed as "hypocrites, and introducers of strange doctrines, and perverters of the servants of God, especially of those who had sinned, not allowing them to repent, but persuading them by foolish teachings."

Thus the Angel of Penitence, who is the divinely appointed Commissioner for carrying into effect the new revelation of penitence, is nevertheless represented as expressing entire approval as an abstract theory of the rigid teaching that there is normally no restoration in the Church for grave sin after Baptism: and also the same Angel of Penitence represents the lax teaching of those who made little of penitence, and would have kept the door open without much concern, as being simply the teaching of false teachers, of heretical guides. Hermas does not seem to find occasion to anticipate that this severe standpoint will fail to find general acceptance with the Christian community of Rome. And the vogue which the *Shepherd* of Hermas is known to have attained falls in with the suggestion that in this matter the

The *Shepherd* the most important of sub-Apostolic writings for the student of Penance.

Attitude of the Church (c. A.D. 100) towards sin after Baptism.

Is there another μετάνοια?

Not normally.

A present message of mercy.

Christian community was in fact in agreement with the writer. The position taken up in the *Shepherd* is that while for serious sins after Baptism there is normally no remission, yet that in view of the prevalence of such sins which has transformed the Church into the similitude of an old and withered woman; and at the same time in view of the imminence of a grievous persecution, and of the approaching end of the age; it pleases Almighty God at this present time, that is to say, up to a limiting day, to extend his prerogative of mercy. He is prepared to reconcile those who have committed sin in the past provided that they repent with all their hearts without delay. Such repentance will only be admitted once and will not be available for future offence.

The *Shepherd* claims to be a series of revelations.

The claim of Hermas that the communications made to him at least in the *Visions* are revelations may first be noticed. Nine passages from the *Visions* are cited above, in which the fact of revelation is affirmed by the use of the verb ἀποκαλύπτω or of the noun ἀποκαλύψις. One or other of these words is employed in the passages cited no less than nineteen times.

Cryptic form in view of persecution.

The cryptic form of the book may be due to the atmosphere of approaching persecution in which it was written. A person not a Christian would not readily be able to identify it with the Christian name. Neither the name *Jesus* nor the title *Christ* is anywhere to be found, nor is the appellation *Christians* in any place applied to the members of the Church. Yet the tower built on the waters of Baptism; the Church, who appears in the semblance of a woman; the Christian moral teaching of the *Commandments*; the contrast of the states of life and death so freely illustrated in the *Similitudes*; all this places the Christian character of the book beyond reasonable question.

Five *Visions*, twelve *Commandments*, ten *Similitudes*.

The revelation is presented in five *Visions* (ὁράσεις), which are followed by twelve *Commandments* (ἐντολαί), and ten *Similitudes* or parables (παραβολαί). It has been debated how far these presentations are to be understood as the narrative of actual dreams or visions experienced by the writer; how far as a work of religious fiction like Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. In any case the writer understood himself to be under a higher guidance, and as communicating to the Church a revelation which had come to him from God.

Hermas claims no personal superiority.

Why this revelation should come to him, Hermas, and not to some person more highly placed or more fitly equipped with spiritual and other capacity, is a difficulty which Hermas feels keenly, and which he employs all his art to meet. The *Vision* with which the book opens shows him that he is personally in need of forgiveness by reason of unguarded thoughts and desires connected with a lady named Rhoda, and also for not having better controlled the irregularities of his household. In the second *Vision* the lewd conduct of his sons, and the unrestrained tongue of his wife, are the subject of the writing revealed by the



aged woman, the Church. She affirms that she is commanded by the Lord to reveal to Hermas that the members of his family will be forgiven all past sins if they will now repent with all their hearts. If they do not so repent before the limiting day they will not be saved.

Thus Hermas at the outset represents that he and his household, so far from being in any position of vantage compared with other Christians, are the first shown by revelation to be certainly in need of the proffered mercy. Throughout the work the subordinate position which he fitly occupies is continually suggested. He may not sit upon the seats reserved for those who have confessed Christ under trial. He is repeatedly reprovved for an unchastened curiosity. He is reminded in words that it is for no merits of his that he is chosen as the medium of the present revelation.<sup>1</sup>

The way in which Hermas is to publish his revelation to the faithful is definitely indicated. Besides the copy for his own use he is to provide two other copies; one for Clement and one for Grapte. Clement, who can hardly be other than S. Clemens Romanus, is to communicate the revelation to the churches abroad. Grapte, who is apparently a deaconess at Rome, will instruct the widows and orphans in her charge. To Hermas himself is committed the duty of making known the revelation to the presbyters and the faithful of Rome generally.<sup>2</sup>

Copies for  
Clement and  
for Grapte.

There is no question but that the *Shepherd* was received in the Church with a large measure of favour. It came to be read with other scriptures in the Church services. It was occasionally bound up in the volume of the canonical Scriptures. That this was so must have been because the book found acceptance as being, what it claimed to be, a revelation. At a later time the *Shepherd* was finally rejected from the list of the canonical Scriptures. But its claim to be a present revelation of the mercies of the Lord in view of present exigencies had at the time found large acceptance: and that acceptance must be understood to have played no little part in the development of the system of Penance in the Christian Church.

Large ac-  
ceptance as  
a revelation.

The main outlines of the revelation are conveyed in the *Visions*. These are five in number. The first and second are mainly concerned with Hermas and his family. The fifth is merely to introduce the Angel of Penitence, or Shepherd, who then proceeds to communicate the *Commandments* and *Similitudes*. The most important of the *Visions* as embodying the revelation of repentance and forgiveness to Christians generally is *Vision iii*. In this *Vision* the Church in the semblance of an aged woman shows Hermas the building of a tower by six angelic builders whom she has brought with her. This tower is built upon the waters of Baptism; where the word *Baptism* is not employed, but the

The  
*Visions*.

*Vision iii*  
the most  
important  
The tow

<sup>1</sup> *Vis.* iii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Vis.* ii. 4.

meaning is made clear by the phrase "because your life has been saved and shall be saved by water."

Of the stones at the disposal of the builders some were built into the tower, and some rejected, these lying about the tower at the base. Other stones again had fallen farther off. Still others fell into the fire. In the explanation it appears that the tower in building is a representation of the Church; that the stones which form it are the living stones of the reconciled; that the rejected stones are those who have sinned, but who, if they repent in time, may still be built into the tower; while those lying far away are more heinous offenders who will find no place in the present building of the Church.

Reconciliation offered to those who repent at once, and do not waver.

In this *Vision* the offer of reconciliation is made to all who repent at once and in the approaching tribulation do not waver. Hermas is instructed to communicate to the saints all that has been revealed to him in order that having heard it, and complied with its warning, they may be purified from their sins, and Hermas with them.

*Vision in.*  
The approaching tribulation.

The fourth *Vision* claims to be the revelation of an approaching tribulation of great severity. If the work of Hermas be assigned to the date of S. Clement, or approximately A.D. 100, this approaching tribulation would be the severe persecution which Christian tradition has assigned to the earlier years of Trajan. It is important to notice that the recognition of a coming persecution as calling for and justifying special concessions of the loosening power of the Church in the case of penitent Christians is not peculiar to Hermas and his time. After the Decian persecution in the expectation of a grave renewal of severity under Gallus, the Christian Church, as will be seen, extended a far-reaching breadth of mercy to all Christians in penitence in order that they might be encouraged and empowered to stand in the evil day. But the work of Hermas is the first indication of the acceptance of this ground of leniency. And his insistence that the penitence should be forthcoming before a limiting day, and also on the fact that the concession made must be regarded as exceptional and once for all, becomes readily intelligible. The rule of the *Shepherd* of Hermas that Penance was only admissible once after Baptism became the rule of the Church for many centuries: but it will hardly be wrong to refer its inception to the limiting necessities of the anxious days which preceded a great persecution.

This a ground of leniency.

But before a limiting day, and once only.

Date and authorship of the *Shepherd*.  
Date either c. A.D. 100 or c. A.D. 140.

Before proceeding farther the questions of date and authorship should receive attention. Hermas represents himself as a contemporary of Clement, and as this Clement is to write letters to churches abroad, he can hardly be other than S. Clemens Romanus, bishop or prominent presbyter at Rome,<sup>1</sup> who is known to have addressed one epistle to the Corinthian Christians. This would indicate a date somewhere about A.D. 100. At variance with the

<sup>1</sup> Hermas does not style him either bishop or presbyter.



representation of Hermas himself is the statement of the Muratorian Fragment: "Hermas very recently in our own times wrote the *Pastor* in the city of Rome when the bishop Pius his brother occupied the see of the church of the city of Rome." And this statement is duplicated in the Liberian Catalogue, where it is said of Pius:—"In his episcopate his brother Ermes wrote a book in which is contained the commandment which the angel gave to him, when he came to him in the garb of a shepherd." Harnack assigns the Muratorian Fragment to A.D. 195–205, and would regard Hippolytus as the probable author of the statement in the Liberian Catalogue. It appears then that not later than about the close of the second century a statement is made as to the date of the publication of the *Shepherd*, which is incompatible with the indication in the book itself that Clement was a contemporary. The date of Clement can hardly be later than A.D. 110: the date of the brother of Pius, "who wrote quite recently in our own time," can hardly be earlier than A.D. 140. It is thus necessary for students, at least if they take the book to be the work of one man, to range themselves in one or other of two ranks. They decide either for a Hermas who was contemporary with Clement, or for a Hermas who was contemporary with Pius.

An ingenious suggestion has been made by Dr. Harnack. He notes that in the *Refutation of all Heresies*<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus records the preaching in Rome of a certain Alcibiades, who was a follower of the heretic Elkesai. Elkesai, according to Hippolytus, stated "that a new remission of sins had been proclaimed (ἐγγεῖναι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις καινὴν ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν) to men in the third year of the reign of Trajan." Elkesai went on to prescribe a second baptism as the means for such remission. Harnack justly points out that the statement of Hippolytus does not ascribe the announcement of a new remission of sins to Elkesai, as it does the anabaptist practice. And if this announcement or revelation of a new remission of sins was not made through Elkesai, through whom was it made? Harnack's suggestion is that the reference may be to Hermas. If this be so, here is a definite date. Trajan reigned jointly with Nerva from October A.D. 97 and became sole emperor on the 27th of January following. The third year of Trajan may therefore be taken as A.D. 100.<sup>2</sup>

The reference of Elkesia to a proclamation of the remission of sins in the third year of Trajan.

The revelation which was made by command of the Church under the guise of a woman of varying age, was, in fact, the revelation "of a new remission of sins." It would not include the whole work of Hermas as we have it. It would be rather that part of it which was communicated to the Christian communities by Hermas, Clement, and Grapte through their three

<sup>1</sup> IX. 13 (Duncker and Schneidewin, p. 462).

<sup>2</sup> For the difficulties of the chronology of the early Roman succession see Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, I. 201 sqq.

“booklets (*βιβλαρίδια*).” These “booklets” would hardly contain anything outside the first three *Visions*. But they contained the essential “revelation” of “a new remission of sins.”

Personality  
of writer.

The personality of the author is perhaps of less importance than the date. If the *bona fides* of the book be admitted, he was a contemporary of Clement, and a layman bearing the common name of Hermas. He was probably a freedman, as he refers to an occasion when he had been sold as a slave. There is nothing in the narrative to indicate social, intellectual, or other distinction. He is an elderly man, who has a wife and grown-up sons. The Hermas who was brother of Pius forty years later may well have been connected with the book by persons who wrote about A.D. 200 simply because of his name. In an uncritical age the Hermas of whom they knew might be readily accepted as the Hermas who wrote the book. If Hermas the brother of Pius were indeed the author the statements of the book as regards living persons would become fabrications, and the whole work would have to be relegated to a lower plane.

Is the *Shepherd* the  
work of one  
man?

Space can hardly be given here to the consideration of the much discussed question whether the *Shepherd* is the work of one man. The style has marked characteristics, and is essentially the same throughout. The work may well, however, have been written in portions at various times. In the book itself eight different occasions of revelations are indicated, and these different revelations might well be recorded at different times. It is at least unlikely that all would be recorded at one time. It is possible that the ninth and tenth *Similitudes* are of considerably later production than the rest of the book.

Passages in  
the *Visions*.

Reference may now be made to particular passages in the *Visions*. In ii. 2 Hermas is instructed to communicate what has been shown to him to his sons and to his wife. Their sin and those of other Christians, will be forgiven on repentance.

“After thou hast made known to them the words of which the Lord gave me commandment that they should be revealed to thee, then all those sins will be remitted to them in which they formerly offended, and also to all the saints who have committed sin up to this present day, if from all their heart they shall repent, and shall remove the waverings from their hearts. For the Lord hath sworn by His glory as to His elect, that if after this determined day there shall be sin by any, they shall not receive salvation. For the repentance of the righteous hath an end. To all the saints the days of repentance are fulfilled: but to the heathen repentance remains open until the last day.”

Forgiveness  
offered to  
those who  
are penitent

The passage is full of interest. There is a present offer of forgiveness to penitent Christians. The requirements are (1) *μετάνοια*, which appears to be used of such compunction of heart



as is admitted to reconciliation,<sup>1</sup> and (2) the putting away of all *διψυχία* or wavering in the coming persecution. After a day determined there can be for the baptised Christian no acceptance. This has reference, however, only to the Christian. For the heathen the door of *μετάνοια* lies open through Baptism till the last day. and do not waver.

A little farther on the coming persecution is dwelt upon, and the hopelessness of the condition which awaits the apostate. Apostates in the coming persecution will not find remission.

“Happy are ye, as many as endure the coming great tribulation, and shall not deny their life. I mean all those who shall deny their Lord in the coming days: for to those who denied in former time, by God’s exceeding mercy grace is accorded.”<sup>2</sup>

Thus to the apostate henceforth there is no remission. For the apostate of the past remission is available. It will be found that the various utterances of Hermas as regards apostates are not fully consistent. To this subject reference will again be made.

To one Maximus, an apostate of past time, a significant warning is addressed. Yet an apostate is restored by subsequent confession of Christ.

“Thou shalt say to Maximus: Behold, tribulation cometh. If it seem good to thee, deny again. *The Lord is nigh to them who turn to Him*, as is written in Eldad and Modat.”<sup>3</sup>

This is the first statement on record of what came to be the conviction of the Christian Church that an apostate, notwithstanding any barriers imposed to reconciliation in this life, might find acceptance by confession of Christ in a subsequent persecution.

In *Vision* iii. the assurances already made are repeated.

Assurances repeated.

“Thou shalt be cleansed from thy shortcomings, and all those who waver not shall be cleansed from all their sins up to this day.”

Thus the conditions of forgiveness are again stated to be (1) repentance, and (2) the absence of wavering under persecution.

In the vision of the tower the following explanation is given of the rejected stones:— The stones rejected in the building of the tower.

“But who are those whom they rejected and cast aside? These are they who sinned and who wish to repent. On this account they have not been cast far outside the tower, because they will be of service for the building, if they shall

<sup>1</sup> That penitence of heart would need some accompaniment of penalty is indicated later on.

<sup>2</sup> *Vis.* ii. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Vis.* ii. 3.

repent. For they who desire to repent, if they repent, will be strong in the faith, that is to say, if they repent now while the tower is in building. For if the tower be completed, they can no longer find place, but will be outcasts.”<sup>1</sup>

The completion of the tower puts a limit to forgiveness.

Here the possibility of forgiveness for those who repent is limited, not by the “determined day,” or by the coming persecution, but by the building of the tower of the Church. This indication of limit is afterwards emphasised in the ninth *Similitude*, in which, probably at a date considerably later, the parable of the tower in building is again employed.

Suggestion of possible penitence hereafter for those not fitted into the tower.

Farther on a very remarkable passage occurs. Hermas asks: “Is repentance possible for all those stones which have been cast away, and did not fit into the building of the tower? And will they have a place in this tower?”

“Repentance, said she, is yet possible (ἔχουσιν μετάνοιαν), but they cannot be fitted into this tower. But they will be fitted in another and much inferior place, and this only after they have been tortured and have completed the days of their sins. And for this reason they will obtain transference, because they have partaken of the righteous Word. And it will come about that they will obtain transference from their torments at such time as there shall arise in their hearts (penitence for) the evil deeds which they have done. If this do not arise in their hearts they will miss salvation through their hard-heartedness.”<sup>2</sup>

Apparently the meaning of this passage is that certain persons cannot find a place in the tower of the Church in this present time, but that in the life hereafter they may find a place, albeit a lower one. Their finding such a place will mean their release from a state of torment, a release dependent on their penitence. It would almost seem to be implied that this penitence can be exercised after death.

The end of all things expected soon.

When the tower is built, “there comes an end. And it will be fully built shortly.”<sup>3</sup> Thus Hermas, in common with all the earliest Christian writers, anticipated the end of all things at an early date. Between his two anticipations a distinction should be made. He expects a great persecution, and the offer of present mercy is closely connected with this expectation. He also expects, probably at much the same time, the final building of the tower of the Church, and the coming of the end of the world.

The saints to be notified three days after the vision.

Three days after the *Vision* of the tower Hermas is to make his announcement to the saints that having heard and obeyed they may be purified from their wickednesses and Hermas with them.<sup>4</sup> So by heartfelt penitence they will renew their spiritual youth.

<sup>1</sup> *Vis.* iii. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Vis.* iii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Vis.* iii. 7.

<sup>4</sup> *Vis.* iii. 8.



The Church herself, rejuvenated by this great reconciliation, assumes again a youthful semblance.<sup>1</sup>

The fourth *Vision* reveals the coming tribulation under the guise of a monstrous beast. The promises of mercy are repeated. The Beast of *Vision* iv.

“Go therefore and relate to the elect of the Lord His mighty works, and say to them that this beast is a figure of the great tribulation which is coming. If then ye prepare yourselves and repent with all your heart unto the Lord it will be possible for you to escape it; if so be that your heart is pure and spotless and that ye serve the Lord blamelessly for the remaining days of your life.”<sup>2</sup>

The fifth *Vision* has for its purpose to introduce the Angel of Penitence, otherwise the Shepherd. His appearance is described as that of a man of glorious aspect, dressed like a shepherd with a white goat's skin, a wallet on his shoulders, and a rod in his hand. This angelic being may be understood as the divinely appointed Commissioner to give effect to the revelation of forgiveness. He proceeds to exercise his commission by communicating to Hermas (1) a body of *Commandments* (ἐντολαί) which form the earliest sketch of moral theology put forth in the Christian Church; and (2) a series of *Similitudes* or parables, which illustrate the operation of these commandments on the baptised, and the contrast of spiritual life and spiritual death which is constantly finding place. The Angel of Penitence, or Shepherd, introduced in *Vision* v.  
He is the Commissioner of Forgiveness.

In the course of the book it is indicated that this Commissioner who gives effect to the commission of forgiveness is also the Shepherd into whose care are committed Hermas and all others who are penitent; that by him penitence or admission to penitence is given to those who respond; that, as he is set over penitence, so he gives understanding to all who repent.

The Angel of Penitence has found no place in the earlier *Visions*. It is now by him that the whole of the remaining instructions are given. They fall under the two heads of *Commandments* and *Similitudes* and together constitute the bulk of the work. And it is in consequence by the name of the *Shepherd* that the work has been known to the Church.

The *Commandments* (ἐντολαί) thus put forth by the Shepherd, or Angel of Penitence, are the first systematic scheme of directions for moral conduct which is found in the non-canonical Christian literature. The word *systematic* may appear an exaggeration: yet undoubtedly some system is intended. Modern usage classifies moral conduct and the transgressions of it under the ten commandments of the old law. But the student of moral theology will be aware how inadequate the classification is to the The *Commandments* a system of Moral Theology.

<sup>1</sup> *Vis.* iii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Vis.* iv. 2.

duties and transgressions of the Christian life; and how it has to be adapted to Christian requirements by a series of almost pitiable ingenuities. To the Christians of the sub-Apostolic age it may never have occurred to adopt as exhaustive for themselves the ancient code of the ten commandments which had come down through the long centuries of unregenerated humanity. The Angel of Penitence divides his direct instructions into twelve sections, which he calls *Commandments*. The subjects of these sections may thus be given:—

1. Of faith in God.
2. Of simplicity of life, in avoidance of slander, and in liberal alms.
3. Of truth, and of the sin of slander.
4. Of adultery.
5. Of patience, rejecting despondency and passionate anger.
6. That on every man attend two Angels, one good and one evil.
7. Of fearing God, and not fearing the devil.
8. Of self-restraint in evil: of freedom in good.
9. Of prayer.
10. Of a morose or desponding temper, which grieves the Spirit of God.
11. Of false prophets: and of the necessity of trying the spirits.
12. Of good and evil desires. They who have the Lord in their heart can keep the commandment. The devil need not be feared.

Not merely  
heads of  
offence.  
The Chris-  
tian outlook.

If the *Commandments* may be termed a *corpus* of moral theology, it will be seen that they are concerned not merely with particular heads of offence, but also with the main features of the entirely new moral outlook which must characterise those who have once been reconciled in Christ. How different it was from any moral outlook outside Christianity can be at once discerned. In the old time to the better men among the mass of the unreconciled had come the warning to abstain from the more heinous forms of offence. Some day their obedience would find its reward; and their redemption be accomplished. But the Christian's redemption was accomplished: he had been admitted into the living unity of the reconciled: and for him the problems of good and evil, of virtue and of sin, should wear the entirely new aspect which must arise for those who were actually included in the ranks of the living. For them the interest of the great conflict as regards themselves lay in the maintenance of that new-found life. To sin a sin unto death meant the loss of that life, and relapse into the death of the unreconciled. The message of the admission of repentance for those who have thus relapsed, if they will come in before the limiting day, is the great message which



the Angel or Commissioner of Penitence is to explain and to apply.

In *Mand.* iv. 2 the Angel thus explains his office :—

The Shepherd's office.

“ I, saith he, am set over penitence, and I give understanding to all those who repent.”

A little farther on in the same *Commandment* occurs the passage already referred to about the current teaching on the subject of penitence. It may here be cited at length.

“ Sir, said I, I will yet add another question. Speak on, saith he. I heard, Sir, said I, from some teachers that there is no other repentance save that, when we went down into water, and received remission of our former sins. He saith to me : Thou hast well heard ; for thus it is. For it behoved that he who had received remission of his sins should sin no more, but should abide in purity. And since thou makest particular inquiry as to all things, I will make this also clear to thee, that I may not give a wrong impulse to those who are about to believe, or to those who have but lately believed in the Lord. For they who have just believed, or are about to believe, have not Penitence (*μετάνοιαν*) for sins open to them, but have (by Baptism) remission of their former sins. It is accordingly to those who were called before these days that the Lord has appointed Penitence (*μετάνοιαν*). For the Lord who knoweth the heart, foreknowing all things, knew the weakness of men and the manifold wiles of the devil, that he would inflict some evil upon the servants of God, and would act wickedly towards them. The Lord, therefore, being abundantly merciful, has had mercy on the work of His hand, and has appointed this Penitence (*μετάνοιαν*), and to me has the power (*ἐξουσία*) of this Penitence been given. But I say unto you, saith he, that if after that great and holy calling any is tempted by the devil and sins, he has but one Penitence.”<sup>1</sup>

The current teaching on penitence.

An endeavour should be made to appreciate as far as possible the outlook indicated in this passage. About the year A.D. 100, or at the latest A.D. 140, a writer in Rome could note that there were teachers in the Christian Church who admitted no *μετάνοια* for grave offence except in Baptism ; could attribute to his supernatural guide entire approval of this view as the normal Christian standpoint ; and could introduce a suggestion of reconciling grave offenders in view of a coming persecution and of the end of the world as a serious subversion of recognised practice which required the authority of a special revelation. Even so it must be jealously guarded. The concession must be once for all : and it must extend only to the sins of the past. The future should remain as absolutely barred to reconciliation as ever. There

<sup>1</sup> *Mand.* iv. 3.

must be no licence for sin in the days which were coming; no possible repetition of this special concession of the Lord.

That there was also other teaching in the Church has been noticed. Some treated sin lightly; and could find a place for the sinner without even calling for any great burden of penitence. But Hermas evidently assumes that the severer outlook rightly holds the field; and that his own revelation is of the character of a special concession in view of special circumstances.

The prerogative of binding is fully assumed; that of loosing not ordinarily available.

The attitude of the Church thus indicated by Hermas is an attitude by which the prerogative of binding the members of the Church is throughout fully assumed, but the prerogative of loosing save in Baptism is not regarded as ordinarily available. The position is so utterly alien from the modern Christian mind that it becomes very difficult for any Christian now to reconstruct it. To the Christian of A.D. 100 it was all important that in face of the heathen world, and of the recurring possibilities of persecution, the Church should stand ever braced for action in entire worthiness. Her obvious blots and blemishes must be removed; her non-efficients thrust aside. They were by comparison a matter of no concern. They might be left to the mercy of the Lord in the great day.

When trouble is imminent, and there is fear that professing Christians may flinch and fail, then there arises an adequate motive for revision of the ranks. As in Hermas, or before the anticipated persecution of Gallus, special facilities are offered. The unfaithful Christian is offered reconciliation that he may be qualified to stand.

The aim of the Angel that all shall "live to God."

The controlling aim of the Angel of Penitence is that all shall "live to God." The faithful and obedient are so living to God: those who have sinned, if they repent, shall "live to God." And, accordingly, in the *Commandments* the whole field of human conduct is surveyed with a view to this "living to God."

If a man exercise faith and self-control, he will "live to God" (*Com. i.*). If he avoid evil-speaking, and give alms with simplicity, he will "live to God" (*Com. ii.*). If he speak nothing but truth, he shall "live to God" (*Com. iii.*). Unchaste desire is a great sin in the servant of God: if he do this evil thing, he worketh death to himself. If an adulteress repent, her husband may take her back, but not repeatedly (*Com. iv.*). Patience must be maintained; and wrath restrained: otherwise the man will be "emptied of the righteous spirit" (*Com. v.*). Two angels abide with every man, an angel of good and an angel of iniquity. He who works not the works of the angel of iniquity "shall live to God" (*Com. vi.*). Fear God: fear not the devil. They who fear the Lord, and keep His commandments "shall live to God" (*Com. vii.*). Necessary restraint must be exercised as regards various forms of evil; adultery and fornication, the lawlessness of intoxication, evil self-indulgence, the multiplicity of foods, the extravagance



of riches, boastfulness, haughtiness, insolence, falsehood, slander, hypocrisy, vindictiveness, blasphemy. He who does not restrain himself from these cannot "live to GOD." A second list enumerates "theft, lying, robbery, false witness, over-reaching, wicked lust, deceit, vainglory, boastfulness, and all other similar vices." "Restrain thyself from all these, that thou mayest live to GOD." Good works, which need no such restraint, are faith, the fear of the Lord, concord, words of righteousness, truth, patience. He who guards these is "blessed in his life." Other good works following on these are the helping of widows, the looking after orphans and needy persons, rescuing the servants of GOD from distresses, hospitality, the absence of contentiousness, peace, humility, reverence of the aged, justice, brotherly kindness, the bearing of arrogance, long-suffering, the absence of vindictiveness, consoling the heavy-hearted, the not driving away those who have lapsed from the faith, but the bringing them to return, the admonishing of sinners, the not oppressing debtors and the needy, and any other works like these. "Walk then in these courses, and restrain not thyself from them, and thou shalt live to GOD" (*Com. viii.*). Prayer must be made without wavering. "For every double-souled man, unless he repent, will with difficulty be saved." "Do thou then serve faith, which has power, and refrain from wavering, which has no power, and thou shalt live to GOD: and all who are like disposed shall live to GOD" (*Com. ix.*). The tenth of the *Commandments* deals with the "grief" (λύπη), which is "the sister of wavering and of anger." A morose or desponding temper may be understood. "Cleanse thyself from this wicked grief, and thou shalt live to GOD: and all shall live to GOD who put away grief from them, and put on all cheerfulness" (*Com. x.*). The spirits of the prophets must be tested: and only the Spirit from above trusted (*Com. xi.*). There are good and evil desires. "Every one who shall serve good desire shall live to GOD" (*Com. xii.*).

At the close of this body of instruction styled *Commandments*, the Angel of Penitence gives a direction to Hermas to communicate what he has heard to others.

Hermas is to make these *Commandments* known.

"He thus completed the twelve *Commandments*, and saith to me, Thou hast these commandments. Do thou walk in them thyself and exhort those who hear thee that their penitence may be pure for the rest of the days of their life. Do thou fulfil with all care this ministry which I give thee, and thou wilt effect much: for thou shalt awaken grace in those who are willing to repent, and they shall obey thy words: for I will be with thee, and will compel them to obey thee." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mand. xii. 3.*

This not to  
be confused  
with the  
former  
commission.

This commission given to Hermas by the Angel of Penitence should not be confused with the former commission given to him by the Church in the *Visions*. The former commission was to announce the revelation of the remission of sins: the present is to convey the instructions of the Angel or Commissioner of Penitence to those who are willing to repent. The keeping of the *Commandments* must be required as a condition of life. The devil need not be feared, for the Angel of Penitence has power over him.

The *Similitudes*.

The *Similitudes* or parables (*παραβολαί*) are next communicated by the Shepherd, or Angel of Penitence. They are illustrations by way of parable of the moral relation of the Christian to God. The contrasted states of spiritual life and spiritual death; the duties and transgressions of the Christian course; the opportunities of repentance and the requirement of penalty; all receive illustration. It is highly probable that the body of *Similitudes* originally published did not extend beyond the eighth. The contents of the first eight *Similitudes* may be indicated as follows:—

#### *Contents of the Similitudes.*

- i. As in this world we have no abiding city, we ought to seek one to come.
- ii. As the vine is supported by the elm, so is the rich man helped by the prayers of the poor.
- iii. As in winter green trees cannot be distinguished from the withered, so in this world neither can the just from the unjust.
- iv. As in summer living trees are discerned from the withered by fruit and living leaves, so in the world to come the just differ from the unjust in happiness.
- v. Of true fasting, and its reward. Also of purity of body.
- vi. Of the penalties of sin imposed by the Angel of Punishment.
- vii. For remission of sin it is necessary to accept affliction.
- viii. The twigs of a willow distributed among the faithful by the Angel Michael are returned in various conditions. The various rewards and penalties which follow.

There follows a direction to Hermas to communicate what he has heard to all.

The first *Similitude* warns the faithful not to give their hearts to earthly acquisitions, but to their heavenly city. The second shows that the poor man helps the rich by his prayers not less than the rich man helps the poor by his gifts.

Contrast of  
the life of  
the reconciled  
with  
the death  
of the unreconciled.

In the third and fourth *Similitudes* the all-important contrast of the living condition of the reconciled and the dead condition of the unreconciled is illustrated. As in the winter green trees cannot readily be distinguished from those which are dead: so in this world the living servant of God is not obviously different



from those who are dead in sin. But as in summer the living trees are distinguished from those which are withered by the fruit and the leaves which they put forth, so when the mercy of the Lord shines forth they shall be made manifest who are the servants of God.

Fasting is good, if the commandments of the Lord are observed. Otherwise it is useless. The flesh must be kept in purity.

Fasting approved. Purity required.

“If thou pollute thy flesh, thou wilt also be a pollution to the Holy Spirit: if thou be a pollution to the Spirit, thou shalt not live.”<sup>1</sup>

Hermas is now concerned about former offences of unguarded thought. He is thus reassured:—

Sins of unguarded thought.

“Concerning former unrealised sins it is, he said, possible to God alone to supply a cure, for all power is with Him. But now guard thyself, and the Almighty Lord, being exceeding merciful, will give healing of former offences committed without knowledge, if in the future thou pollute neither thy flesh nor thy spirit: for both are held together and involve each other in defilement. Keep therefore both in purity, and thou shalt live to God.”<sup>2</sup>

The repeated utterances of Hermas on the subject of the gravity of sins of impure thought and desire should be noted. They are the earliest voicing outside the canonical books of that continuous tradition of the Christian Church that desire alone, if fully and wilfully consented to, amounts to mortal sin. It is the teaching of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. It is based by Hermas here on the teaching of S. Paul that the bodies of Christians are the temples of the Holy Ghost. It is one of the great distinctive principles of the Christian morality. He who does not keep himself pure in heart cannot maintain the state of grace and life: he falls into the state of sin and death. Yet for those who have thus offended in the past the Angel of Penitence now offers present remission on repentance.

The *Commandments* are of value to those who repent. Without obedience to them repentance is vain. Hermas is shown a shepherd of luxury, who leads his sheep to pleasant and joyous courses, to the neglect of the commandments of the living God. Some of these are allowed no return to life through repentance, because to their careless conduct they have added blasphemy of the name of the Lord. “For such therefore there is death.” Others who have lived lives of self-indulgence, but have not added blasphemy to it, will be allowed a repentance through which they can attain to life. Here the definite offence of the apostate who denies the name of the Lord is stated to constitute an impassable bar to reconciliation, even under the special conditions of the present announcement.<sup>3</sup>

Repentance without obedience of no service.

For some apostates no reconciliation.

<sup>1</sup> *Sim. v. 7.*

<sup>2</sup> *Sim. v. 7.*

<sup>3</sup> *Sim. vi. 2.*

The penalties of sin.

Farther on in the sixth *Similitude* come important statements on the penalties which are demanded by sin. An Angel of Punishment appears. He is one of the blessed Angels to whom the function of punishment is committed. Hermas inquires of the Angel of Penitence what sort of punishment this Angel of Punishment inflicts.

These applied by the Angel of Punishment in the experience of life.

“Hear, he saith, the various torments and penalties. The torments occur in this life : for some are punished by losses, others by necessities, others by various infirmities, others by every sort of disorder; others undergo insult from the unworthy and suffer in many other ways; for many, being disordered in their purpose, take a variety of affairs in hand, and nothing at all succeeds with them. And they say that they do not prosper in their undertakings, and it comes not into their minds that they have wrought evil deeds, but they blame the Lord. When therefore they have been afflicted with all kinds of affliction then they are delivered unto me for good training, and they are made strong in the faith of the Lord, and for the remaining days of their life they serve the Lord with pure hearts. [And if they repent, there ariseth in their heart the remembrance of the evil deeds which they have done, and then they will glorify God, saying that He is a righteous Judge, and that they have justly suffered, each according to his deeds; and so serve the Lord for the remaining time with a pure heart <sup>1</sup>] and are successful in all their undertakings, obtaining from the Lord all things whatsoever they ask : and then they glorify the Lord, because they were delivered to me, and no longer suffer any evil happenings.” <sup>2</sup>

In reply to an inquiry of Hermas as to the adjustment of penalty to offence, the Angel of Penitence says:—

Punishment corresponds in measure to the sin.

“The time of luxury and deceit is one hour : but the hour of torment is equivalent to thirty days. If, accordingly, a man indulge in luxury and deceit for one day, and is tormented one day, the day of his torture is equivalent to a whole year. Thus for as many days as a man admits indulgence, for so many years does he undergo punishment. Thou seest, therefore, that the time of luxury and deceit is very short, but that of punishment and torment long.” <sup>3</sup>

Thus, according to the Angel of Penitence, not only does grave sin involve penalty, but the penalty corresponds in an even mathematical measure to the sin. The teaching that for a short period of sinful indulgence a long period of punishment and torment is required may not improbably have much to do with the after development of terms of penance extending over many years.

The graver sins involve

Hermas next asks what those harmful indulgences are which

<sup>1</sup> *Cod. Vat.*

<sup>2</sup> *Sim. vi. 3.*

<sup>3</sup> *Sim. vi. 4.*



thus involve torment. The Angel specifies anger, adultery, drunkenness, slander, falsehood, avarice, theft, and the like. ing grave punishment.

“All these are indulgences hurtful to the servants of God. On account of these infidelities do they suffer who are punished and tormented. . . . And the fore-mentioned hurtful indulgences bring torments and punishments upon them, and if they continue in them, and do not repent, they bring death upon themselves.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus the specified sins are mortal sins involving death unless repentance find place; and even if repentance find place, these sins involve severe penalty. Nor is this penalty accidental or of occasional occurrence. It is involved in the sin, and is as necessary a condition of forgiveness as repentance itself.

“I know, too, that they have repented with their whole heart: but dost thou think that the sins of those who repent with their whole heart are thereupon remitted? Not altogether so. Rather is it necessary that he who repents do torment his own soul and sternly humble himself in his every deed, and be afflicted in every kind of various affliction: and if he endure the afflictions which come upon him, He who created all things, and supplied them with power, will assuredly have mercy upon him, and will give him a certain healing. And this assuredly if He see the heart of the penitent to be pure from evil act. For thee and for thy house it is profitable that you suffer affliction now. But why should I say much to thee? Thou must be afflicted as that Angel of the Lord appointed, who delivered thee to me. And for this do thou give thanks to the Lord, that He has deemed thee worthy of His showing to thee the affliction, that, knowing it beforehand, thou mayest bear it with courage.”<sup>2</sup>

The teaching of the *Shepherd* on the subject of the penalty due to sin presents several features of interest. It emphasises an exercise of the Divine justice, which has been familiar at least in all the Christian ages to persons of spiritual experience, although in technical books on Penance this Divine retribution often finds no place. God Himself in the ordering of the circumstances which form the setting of each man's life, sends him definite punishment for sins. This punishment may take the form of losses, of necessities, of infirmities, of harass and disorder, and the like. It is neither inflicted by human authority, nor self-inflicted by the sinner. It is by ordering from above, here represented as put in force by a special minister of punishment, appointed from the ranks of the blessed angels. The humble endurance of such punishment forms part, if not the whole, of the necessary discipline which must precede or accompany the forgiveness of the sinner.

Summary of teaching on the penalty of sin. It comes (1) by the ordering of circumstances,

<sup>1</sup> *Sim.* vi. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Sim.* vii. 4.

and also  
(2) by self-discipline.

The discipline of the sinner may also be set in motion by impulse from another source. The sinner may discipline himself. In the fifth *Similitude* fasting had been approved, if accompanied by the right dispositions. So, too, in the seventh *Similitude* the penitent is "to torment his own soul, and to humble himself with all his might (*ἰσχυρῶς*) in his every act." Here more seems to be implied than the acceptance of penalty which comes from without.

No mention of penalties as assigned by the bishop.

But these two forms of discipline, the discipline sent from above in the circumstance of life, and the discipline self-inflicted by the penitent, are the only two forms of discipline which Hermas brings under review. He never mentions the assignment of penalty by the bishops or presbyters of the Church. Clearly a severe discipline was exercised by authority, for the apostate stood outside and found remission barred. But it is remarkable that there is no indication throughout the work of Hermas of penalties or disabilities as assigned by the bishops or presbyters of the Church.

The Angel Michael retains those who have no need to repent.

There is an interesting statement by the Angel of Penitence in the eighth *Similitude* that the glorious Angel Michael, who governs the faithful, retains those who have not transgressed; but that he commits to the Angel of Penitence those who have transgressed that they may repent.<sup>1</sup>

Penitence is the gift of God.

Hermas is invited to take notice how many have rendered penitence, and found salvation. He thereupon asks why all have not repented. The Angel of Penitence thus replies:—

"(The Lord) gave penitence (*μετάνοιαν*) to those whose hearts he saw to be desirous of becoming pure and of serving Him whole-heartedly: but in the case of those whose craft and iniquity He observed, and who purpose to do penance (*μετανοεῖν*) in a hypocritical spirit, to them He did not grant penitence (*μετάνοιαν*) lest they should again profane His name."<sup>2</sup>

*Μετάνοια* usually comprises (1) penitence, (2) discipline, (3) reconciliation.

Thus a real penitence is only possible for those to whom God gives it. It is the gift of God. The penitence which God gives must be understood to be a penitence which He is prepared to accept, if His gift be duly responded to. The *μετάνοια* in this passage, as generally in Hermas, may be taken to comprise (1) a penitent heart, (2) accepted discipline, and (3) ultimate reconciliation. Yet in this very passage the crafty persons whose intention of penance is hypocritical are said to intend *μετανοεῖν*, where the word appears to mean the status of the penitent with the following reconciliation, without the penitence of spirit which God alone gives, and without which can come no reality of absolution. The words *μετάνοια* and *μετανοεῖν* have, in fact, at this early period to be challenged as to their meaning on each occasion

<sup>1</sup> *Sim.* viii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Sim.* viii. 6.



of their use. Later the words come to be normally employed of the technical status of Penance with reconciliation to follow.

Next to be noticed is a remarkable passage about apostates.

“Hear, saith he : they whose branches were found withered and eaten of moths are the apostates and traitors of the Church, who have blasphemed the Lord in their sins, and have been ashamed of the name of the Lord by which they were called. These, accordingly, perished to the Lord to the end. Thou seest that not one of these repented, although they heard the words which thou spakest to them, which I delivered to thee. From such life is absent.”<sup>1</sup>

Certain apostates who find no remission.

In this passage it is again stated that apostates find no remission : but the reason indicated is that God hath given penitence to none of them. It appears to follow that if God had given them penitence they would have been qualified for acceptance. At a later period, after the Decian persecution, it came to be recognised that apostates could repent fitly, and that they might in time be reconciled. The different shades of conviction in Hermas himself as to apostates call for notice.

The next class of offenders to be mentioned are those “introducers of strange doctrines, who turn aside the servants of God, especially those who have sinned, not permitting them to repent, but reassuring them by their foolish teachings.” Some reference has already been made to these laxer moralists. Hermas finds their doctrines strange (ξένas) in Rome at least. To him they are gravely blameworthy ; but they are not, like the apostates, to be refused penitence and reconciliation. They do, however, need repentance.

The laxer moralists blame-worthy, but admissible to penitence.

“As many as shall not repent have lost their life : as many of them as repented became good, and their place was found in the first walls. Some of them even ascended the tower. Thus thou seest, saith he, that the penitence of sinners brings life : but not to repent is death.”<sup>1</sup>

It thus appears that although the more lenient teachers were heard in Rome, they were far from being accorded in the mind of Hermas a claim to parallel influence with that of the stricter teachers. Their doctrine is “strange” : and it is unreservedly condemned. If they do not repent they will find death.

Another class of persons referred to are those Christians who lived “with the heathen” (μετὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν). These would be like Christians in India living in the bazaars apart from their Christian fellows, and tending to share in practices and habits of life which carry some measure of soil. Of such Christians at Rome some “did not depart from God.” Yet even these needed repentance, and they are warned that their repentance must be speedy if they are to dwell in the tower.<sup>2</sup>

Christians who live with the heathen.

<sup>1</sup> *Sim.* viii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Sim.* viii. 9.

Hermas is  
to make the  
*Similitudes*  
known.

At the close of the eighth *Similitude* occurs an instruction to Hermas to publish what he has heard. A similar instruction had closed the *Commandments*: and it is probable that the *Similitudes* on their first publication did not extend beyond the eighth.

“Go thou and tell them to all that they may repent, and so shall they live to God. Because the Lord who had compassion on all sent me to give Penitence (δοῦναι τὴν μετάνοιαν), although some are not worthy because of their works.”<sup>1</sup>

Forgiveness  
again  
promised.

Another assurance of forgiveness upon penitence is added:—

“As many as from their whole heart repent and purify themselves from all the aforesaid wickednesses, and add no more to their sins, will receive healing from the Lord for their former transgressions, if they did not waver about the commandments, and they shall live to God.”<sup>1</sup>

The later  
*Similitudes*  
(ix. x.).

Hermas states that it was at some time after he had written the *Commandments* and *Similitudes* of the *Shepherd* that the angelic visitant came to him again, and announced that he would show him more exactly what the Holy Spirit, speaking to him in the guise of the Church, had already shown him, that is to say, in the *Visions*. The ninth *Similitude* is, in fact, an amplification of the vision of the tower. It is much longer than the other *Similitudes*. Most of these are short, and only one of them, the eighth, contains as many as eleven chapters. The ninth *Similitude* has thirty-three chapters. It is, in fact, a long appended treatise. It appears from chap. 28 that by this time many of the Christians had been brought before the authorities, of whom some had suffered cheerfully for the name of the Son of God; and others, though they did in fact suffer, yet had in their hearts admitted hesitation. This probably means that when the ninth *Similitude* was written, the general persecution of Trajan had come and gone. The warnings against admitting hesitation in the time to come are entirely in accordance with what is known as regards the liability of the Christians in the later years of Trajan. That emperor, in his *Rescript* to Pliny, gave instructions that Christians were no longer to be sought out. If they were brought before the authorities, and convicted, that was another matter.

The perse-  
cution of  
Trajan may  
now be past

Why is the  
tower not  
finished?

It is as the  
Lord pleases.

In chap. 5 Hermas asks: What is the reason that the building of the tower was not finished?

“The tower, he answered, cannot be finished just yet, until the Lord of it come and examine the building, in order that, if any of the stones be found to be decayed, He may change them: for the tower is built according to His pleasure.”<sup>2</sup>

And so long  
as the tower  
is not com-  
pleted peni-  
tence is open.

In these passages is probably to be found the key to the ninth *Similitude*. In the original work the remission of sins had been offered to the penitent with a limitation of time related to two coming events. One of these was an imminent persecution;

<sup>1</sup> *Sim.* viii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Sim.* ix. 5.



the other was the end of the world. These two determining events had been somewhat confused. To those who have lived through the persecution, but do not see any present signs of the end of the world, the question now arrives: What of the special offer of remission to the penitent before the determining day? Hermas falls back on the vision of the tower. So long as the tower is not completed; so long the opportunities hold good.

The efficacy of repentance, save in the case of the worst apostates, is affirmed in considerable detail. In the course of the vision or parable certain beautiful women, clothed in black, but with uncovered shoulders and hair streaming, entice many of the servants of God. These women are twelve in number. It is explained that four of them, stronger than the rest, are Unbelief, Absence of Self-Control, Disobedience, Deceit. The other eight are Moroseness (*λύπη*), Evil Purpose (*πονηρία*), Wantonness, Sharpness of Anger, Falsehood, Folly, Backbiting, Hatred.<sup>1</sup> "The servant of God, who bears these names, shall indeed see the kingdom of God, but shall not enter into it." There are also shown twelve faithful virgins. Of these the first four are named Faith, Self-Control, Power, Forbearance. The other eight are Simplicity, Innocence, Purity, Cheerfulness, Truth, Understanding, Concord, Charity. "He who bears these names and the name of the Son of God will be able to enter into the kingdom of God" (ix. 15).

Twelve sins  
as women  
clothed in  
black.

Twelve  
virtues  
as faithful  
virgins.

Hermas asks concerning the beautiful women clothed in black:—

"What, then, sir, if these men, being such as they are, shall repent and put away their desires for these women, and shall return to the virgins, and walk in their strength and in their works, shall they not enter into the house of God?"<sup>2</sup>

The reply given by the Angel is:—

"They shall enter in, if they put away the works of these women, and take again the strength of the virgins, and walk in their works. For on this account was there a cessation in the building, in order that, if they repent, they may come into the building of the tower. But if they do not repent, then others will come in their place, and these will be altogether cast out."

Thus the unexpected period of waiting is described as a cessation of the building of the tower, expressly intended to afford facilities of repentance.

Facilities of  
repentance  
afforded by  
the cessa-  
tion of  
building.

For apostates of definite purpose there is in the Church no remission.

For wilful  
apostates  
no remis-  
sion.

"From the first mountain, which was black, those who had once believed were these following: apostates, and

<sup>1</sup> *Sim.* ix. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Sim.* ix. 14.

blasphemers against the Lord, and betrayers of the servants of God. For these there is no repentance; but there is death. For this reason are they black: for their sort are outlaws.”<sup>1</sup>

Distinction  
of apostates.

There is no hesitation here as regards the purposeful apostate. But a distinction will be presently made in favour of those who, though they had apostatised in former days, had not denied from the heart. In chap. 26 the Angel of Penitence says:—

“To these therefore repentance is open, unless they are found to have denied from the heart: for if any be found to have denied from the heart, I do not know if he can live. And I say this not for these present days, in order that any one who has denied may obtain repentance (μετάνοιαν): for it is impossible that he who is now about to deny the Lord can be saved; but to those who denied Him long ago, repentance seems to be possible.”

Synopsis of  
passages  
treating of  
apostates.

A synopsis may here be given of the various passages in the *Shepherd* which treat of the case of the apostate.

In *Vis.* ii. 2 it is said:—

“To those who denied in earlier times God is become gracious because of His exceeding tender mercy.”

In *Sim.* vi. 2:—

“Among them (the merry sheep) there is no repentance bringing life (μετάνοια ζωῆς), for they added to their sins and blasphemed the name of God. Death is the portion of such.”

In *Sim.* viii. 6:—

“These are apostates and betrayers of the Church, who also blasphemed the Lord in their sins, and who were ashamed of the name of the Lord whereby they were called: these therefore were entirely lost from God: thou seest that no one of them repented, although they heard the words which thou spakest to them, which I delivered to thee: from such the life is departed.”

The teaching of the ninth *Similitude* has but just been considered. Apostates are outside law. For them is death. But for those who denied long ago, and not from the heart, repentance is open.

It may be suggested that if the work of Hermas had special reference to the approaching persecution under Trajan, he wished to make it clear that the apostate in the persecution of Trajan would find no door open to return; and that in *Sim.* ix., when the more general persecution under Trajan may be past, Hermas still maintains this position with regard to it. On the other hand,

<sup>1</sup> *Sim.* ix. 19.



for all persecutions prior to the persecution of Trajan, he seems to have wished to leave the door open for return, provided that the person in his unfaithfulness had not rendered the full adhesion of his heart.

This attitude of Hermas is a remarkable introduction to the rigorism of the second century.

Returning now to the teaching of the ninth *Similitude*, it is to be noticed that for offenders other than apostates, the Shepherd leaves repentance open. This is so for hypocrites and teachers of wickedness (ix. 19); for those whose lives are choked by riches or much business (ix. 20); for waverers, though these are stated to be neither living nor dead (ix. 21); for persons vainglorious of their knowledge (ix. 22); for backbiters (ix. 23); for unconscientious ministers (*διάκονοι*, ix. 26). Christians who have sinned are happy if they suffer for the name of the Lord; for then the Lord grants them life, who otherwise would have died to God (ix. 28).

For offenders other than apostates repentance is open.

Offenders are exhorted to heal themselves by repentance while the tower is still building (ix. 32).

The tenth *Similitude* contains the Shepherd's last instructions to Hermas for the continuance and completion of his ministry.

The bearing of the *Shepherd* of Hermas on the history of Penance in the Christian Church is important. First there is the indication of the attitude of the Church as regards those who have sinned gravely after Baptism. For such it is held that normally repentance is not open, though some reprehensible teachers are careless in the matter. There is, however, a present need of mercy in view of the imminence of a great persecution and of the end of the world. Hermas is to be the medium of a revelation that penitence leading to life will be accorded for this present need. Those who should seek the remission of offence must, however, avail themselves of the offer without delay, before a certain limiting day. After that repentance will not be open. Also it must be clearly understood that the offer of remission on repentance has no reference to future grave sins. Also, such repentance bringing life can for the baptized only be admitted once. This provision became the general rule of the Church. The constituent parts of this penitence are (1) compunction of heart, (2) the absence of wavering in the face of persecution, and (3) the due measure of punishment, followed by (4) reconciliation or remission. Punishment is assigned by the Angel of Punishment, one of the blessed Angels, who like certain Angels in the Revelation of S. John, is employed in the administration of penalty. Such penalty is usually given through the circumstance of life. Penalty may also be voluntarily accepted. There is no reference to penances assigned by the clergy. Yet it is clear that discipline was exercised by those in authority: for apostates were subjected to severe

Bearing of the *Shepherd* on the history of Penance.

exclusion. The persons who are called upon to undertake penitence would include in the first place such grave offenders as had formally been suspended from communion by the Church: also others who, like *Hermas* himself, were under no formal ban. *Hermas*, indeed, represents himself as only gradually recognising that he had any need of repentance. Doubtless also among the persons who would come forward to repent there would be represented various grades of offence, and various stages of the conscious realisation of offence. The present exceptional offer of mercy covered all the various forms of sin which men had committed in past time with the sole exception of the worst form of apostasy. For apostasy from the heart, or purposeful apostasy, there was no remission. There is no reference to formal pronouncements of absolution or reconciliation: and no reference to the formal restoration of communion: though one or both of these almost certainly found place. Also there is no reference to the bishop or to the presbyters as the ministers of reconciliation. In all the historic records of the first thousand years of Christianity at Rome it is the bishop who controls the exercise of the commission of loosing as also of the commission of binding. But into the part played by the bishop or by the presbyters in the anxious days before the persecution of Trajan the notable work of *Hermas* affords no insight.

The student of the *Shepherd* will, however, have found it hardly open to doubt that the repentance and the reconciliation which *Hermas* announced as available were a repentance and a reconciliation which would find open and public recognition by the Church. They were a repentance and a reconciliation available for Christian people who had fallen into sins after Baptism, and the purpose of the offer was not only that these might find pardon before the Lord, but that they might be strengthened and restored to take their stand in the ranks of the Church before the brunt of the persecution fell. The vision of the tower, which may be called the dominating presentation of the book, is a vision of the Church. Those who repent and are accepted are replaced by the angelic builders as stones in the tower of the Church. Some there are who find no place in this tower of the Church, and who yet may find a place of repentance hereafter. But a primary purpose of the revelation is to rejuvenate the Church to meet the approaching tribulation.

From the time of *Hermas* may be traced a system of Penance.

Before the time of *Hermas* it is not possible to indicate the existence of any regular *system* of Penance in the Church. The teaching alluded to by *Hermas* that there was no other *μετάνοια* but that preceding Baptism, is itself convincing evidence of the absence of any *system* of Penance for offenders after Baptism. The Apostolic practice had left on record striking examples which served as valuable precedents for the exercise of the Lord's commission alike in binding and in loosing. Thus the action of



S. Paul in binding the incestuous Corinthian, or again Hymenæus and Alexander; and his action in loosing the offender in the second epistle to the Corinthians; were striking instances of the exercise of the Apostolic authority. But before the time of Hermas it is not possible to discern any ordinary status of penitents, or any ordinary practice of public exomologesis. From the time of Hermas onwards can be traced indications that the status of penitents and the public exomologesis were becoming accepted features of Church practice. Thus about A.D. 135 the heretic Cerdon will be found making exomologesis at Rome; about A.D. 141 Marcion asks for *μετάνοια* at Sinope, and is refused, and is also refused reconciliation at Rome; the women affected by the heresy of Marcus the Gnostic make exomologesis in Asia about A.D. 150, and other women entangled in the same heresy in the Rhone district also make exomologesis a few years later. At the end of the century the description given by Tertullian of the exomologesis of his day shows a highly developed system of the public exercise of Penance involving elaborate circumstance. At the close of the second century, accordingly, the status of the penitent and the public exomologesis are established features of the life of the Church. And in the light of this highly developed system it becomes possible to discern in the earlier instances enumerated the beginnings and progress of this system.

The status of penitents, and the public exomologesis.

It cannot be said of Hermas that it was his desire to establish a lasting system of Penance in the Church of Christ. He apprehended the imminence at once of a great persecution, and of the end of the world: and he had no thought of creating a system which would last on into succeeding ages. But it was his intention and design, led as he believed by revelation from above, to bring about an immediate and general repentance on the part of the many baptized persons who had fallen into sin, with a view at once to their forgiveness and to their resumption of their place as the accredited members of the Church. For these purposes he represents to the Christian presbyters and people of Rome that he has received the revelation of a great indulgence or pardon; and, as under the teaching of the Angel of Penitence, he elaborates in the Commandments and Similitudes a Moral Theology which discriminates the classes of sin, and indicates where the penitent sinners may be admitted to pardon.

No intention of Hermas to found a system.

There is no record of what in fact took place in the way of publicly recognised penitence and of publicly accorded reconciliation in the days of foreboding before the persecution fell. Was there, indeed, a great outburst of the indignation of sinners against themselves, and a great outpouring of the Divine mercy on humbled souls about to press onwards to the martyrs' crown? No answer can be heard. But when the persecution has come and gone; when the world is still found to last, and with it the

But a system in fact comes to exist.

Christian Church with all her chequered story of Christian faithfulness and Christian fault; there comes to exist a system of Church penitence, which in some marked features is related to the teaching of the *Shepherd*.

Two features of this system.  
(a) Penance admitted once only.

Of these the most obvious is the rule that Penance was only admissible to the baptized once in the lifetime. This rule, which in its inception was intended only for a particular emergency, was retained by the Christian Church as a standing regulation. It was observed throughout the Church during at least the second and third centuries, and lasted on in the West for several centuries more. It is reiterated by a canon of the Third Council of Toledo as late as A.D. 589.

(b) A normally rigorist attitude towards the capital sins.

As regards the capital sins the *Shepherd* of Hermas may be described as a book of rigorist conviction, which indicates a wide measure of pardon as available for a single and exceptional occasion. The Church of the second and third centuries will be found largely taking up the rigorist position that the three capital sins of apostasy, adultery, and bloodshed were outside the scope of the loosing office of the Church; and only receding from this position by gradual steps involving much difference and struggle.

#### (b) *Other Sub-Apostolic Evidence*

The three writers whose names occur most readily to the student of the sub-Apostolic period, S. Clement of Rome, S. Ignatius, and S. Polycarp, make no important contribution to the history of Penance.

S. Clement of Rome.

The epistle of S. Clement to the Corinthian Christians (c. A.D. 96) was called forth by disorders in the Church of Corinth: and some indications of formal discipline would not be unsuitable. What S. Clement actually says to the leaders of the revolt is as follows:—

“Do ye therefore who set up the faction submit yourselves to the presbyters, and be disciplined to penitence (παιδεύθητε εἰς μετάνοιαν). Bowing the knees of your heart, learn to be in subjection, putting away the assertive and overweening arrogance of your tongue; for it is better for you to be found small and of no account in the flock of Christ, than while seeming to have eminence to be torn away from His hope.”<sup>1</sup>

The instruction in this passage that they should “submit” themselves “to the presbyters,” and should be “disciplined to penance” may well have had a reference to Church procedure: but this cannot be certainly affirmed.

The following further passages may be cited:—

“Stretch forth your hands to the Almighty God, beseeching Him to have mercy, if ye sinned by remissness.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C. 57.

<sup>2</sup> C. 2.



“Let us fix our gaze on the blood of Christ, and know how precious His blood is to GOD, because when shed for our salvation it procured the grace of penitence (*μετανοίας*) for the whole world.”<sup>1</sup>

“Accordingly, willing that all His beloved should have their part in repentance (*μετανοίας μετασχεῖν*), He established them by His almighty will.”<sup>2</sup>

None of these passages appear to have special reference to the formal penitence of the baptized before the Church, or to their restoration through the exercise in the Church of the commission of loosing.

S. Ignatius, the martyr bishop of Antioch (c. A.D. 112), in the S. Ignatius. letters accepted as genuine, uses *μετανοεῖν* and *μετάνοια* only when he is referring to the conversion of the heathen, or to the return of schismatics to the fold of the Church. He uses one or other of the words on six occasions (*Eph.* x. 1; *Phil.* iii. 2, viii. 1; *Smyr.* iv. 1, v. 3, ix. 1).<sup>3</sup> The first of these (*Eph.* x.) refers to non-Christians, and is the *μετάνοια* which leads to Baptism. On the other five occasions of use the words refer to the return of schismatics to the unity of the Church, and may probably imply a public procedure as well as compunction of the heart. Public procedure would probably be held necessary in the case of avowed schismatics before they could be restored to the unity of the Church. Such public procedure may be contemplated in the phrase “as many as having rendered penitence (*μετανοήσαντες*) come to the unity of the Church” (*Phil.* iii.); or again in the statement:—

“To all therefore who render penitence (*μετανοοῦσιν*) the Lord accords remission, if they render penitence (*μετανοήσωσιν*) into the unity of GOD and the council of the bishop” (*Phil.* viii).

S. Polycarp of Smyrna appears to refer in his *Epistle* (c. A.D. S. Polycarp. 112) to the exercise by the presbyters of a prerogative of judgment when he says

“Let the priests be compassionate, merciful to all, bringing back the wandering, having an oversight of all the weak, not neglecting the widow, or the orphan or the poor . . . not quickly according belief against any, not relentless in judgment, knowing that we all are debtors in sin” (*Phil.* vi. 1; cf. vi. 11).

If the *Didache* or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* be assigned The *Didache*. to this period it may here be noted that it contains two references to confession of sin:—

“Thou shalt confess (*ἐξομολογήσῃ*) in the church, and shall

<sup>1</sup> C. 7.

<sup>2</sup> C. 8.

<sup>3</sup> In *Phil.* viii. *μετανοεῖν* is used twice.

not proceed to thy prayer with an evil conscience. This is the way of life" (iv. 14).

"On the Lord's day being assembled together break the bread and make Eucharist having first confessed your offences (προεξομολογησάμενοι), that your sacrifice may be pure" (xiv. 1).

The references to confession in these passages appear to contemplate the public acknowledgment of sin by the members of the congregation generally.

*Homily known as the Second Epistle of S. Clement. A place of repentance for fleshly sins.*

The ancient *Homily*, formerly known as the *Second Epistle of S. Clement to the Corinthians* is assigned by Lightfoot to a date not later than A.D. 140.<sup>1</sup> The homilist impresses on his hearers the importance of repentance, especially in the matter of fleshly defilement. The following passage may be cited:—

"Therefore, brethren, since we have found no small occasion for repentance, seeing that we have time, let us turn again unto God that called us, while we have still One that receiveth us. For if we bid farewell to these enjoyments and conquer our soul in refusing to fulfil its evil lusts, we shall be partakers of the mercy of Jesus. But ye know that the day of judgment cometh even now *as a burning oven, and the powers of the heavens shall melt*, and all the earth as lead melting on the fire, and then shall appear the secret and open works of men. Almsgiving therefore is good as a penance for sin (ὡς μετάνοια ἁμαρτίας). Fasting is more potent than prayer, almsgiving then both. And *love covereth a multitude of sin*, but prayer out of a good conscience delivereth from death. Blessed is every man, who is found filled with these. For almsgiving is the relief of sin (κούφισμα ἁμαρτίας)" [c. xvi.].

In the view of the homilist grave sin involves death, unless men repent while they have time. Repentance implies that they turn again unto God and bid farewell to their sinful enjoyments. Repentance also implies certain exercises of satisfaction, or penances. Of these the most potent is almsgiving, an exercise of the love which covereth a multitude of sins. Next in the scale of efficacy as a penance is fasting. Lowest in potency comes prayer, which yet avails to deliver from death. The order of almsgiving, fasting, prayer, regarded as penances, is noteworthy.

The *Homily* is assigned by Lightfoot to Corinth, and, if this assignment may be accepted, it is interesting in view of the relation of the homily to contemporary rigorism. The sins with which the homilist is primarily concerned are sins against the sanctity of the body, and, like Hermas, he finds a place of repentance for such sins. At Corinth the bishop Dionysius will be shown

<sup>1</sup> *Apostolic Fathers*, ii. 203.



about A.D. 170 pleading with Pinytus of Crete for a merciful consideration for sins of this class.

The heretic Cerdon, usually mentioned as the precursor of Cerdon. Marcion, falls within the sub-Apostolic period. Irenæus relates that he was at Rome in the episcopate of Hyginus. The date may be given as about A.D. 135. Irenæus says of him that

“coming into the church, and making exomologesis (ἐξομολογούμενος) he so continued, sometimes teaching in secret, sometimes again making exomologesis, and sometimes being convicted of what he had taught amiss, and being separated (ἀφιστάμενος) from the assembly of the brethren.”<sup>1</sup> His exomologesis, and his separation from the brethren.

The narrative, if accurate, is full of information. It shows an erroneous teacher making public *exomologesis* in the Church, the word being in ordinary and technical use a little later for a penitential exercise of public humiliation. But it also shows him doing this repeatedly, whereas in the Roman church when evidence multiplies only one Penance is found to have been admitted for grave sins after Baptism; a rule which is probably due to the teaching of the *Shepherd* of Hermas. Also the Church is shown taking action apparently on her own initiative in convicting the offender of false teaching, and in separating him from the assembly of the brethren.<sup>2</sup> Such action had been taken by S. Paul in the case of Hymenæus and Alexander. Repetition of exomologesis.

The fact that Cerdon was a false teacher, but not charged with grave moral offence, may give some insight into the repetition of the *exomologesis*. What was most important in the case of a false teacher was the admission and recantation of error. On such admission and recantation Cerdon may have been accorded restoration to the unity of the Church on more than one occasion.

The incidents of the sin and excommunication of Marcion will also fall in the sub-Apostolic period. According to an account transmitted by Epiphanius, Marcion, who in after years became conspicuous in the history of the Church as an influential heretic, was the son of the bishop of Sinope on the Euxine.<sup>3</sup> In his early manhood he betrayed a Christian virgin, and was in consequence expelled from the Church by his own father, the bishop of Sinope. Marcion made much entreaty, and asked for admission to Penance (αἰτήσας μετάνοιαν), but his father sternly refused to accord it. Epiphanius, who writes in a later age, indicates that the disgrace brought upon the bishop was the reason of his rigid attitude. In the second century it was probably sufficient that the sin was capital, and the bishop of the sterner school. Marcion, unable to attain reconciliation at Sinope, set out for Rome, where he Refused admission to penance (1) at Sinope, Marcion.

<sup>1</sup> *Contra hæreses*, III. iv. 3.

<sup>2</sup> If the translation given above correctly renders the meaning of ἀφιστάμενος.

<sup>3</sup> *Adversus hæreses*, 42.

arrived after the death of Hyginus. This would be about A.D. 141. (2) at Rome. At Rome he "betook himself to the elders (πρεσβύτεροι) still surviving, who had owed their beginnings to the disciples of the apostles. From these he sought reconciliation, but none accorded it to him."<sup>1</sup> It would seem from the narrative of Epiphanius that Marcion was piqued at this treatment, and also at not finding advancement; with the result that he attached himself to the heresy of Cerdon, and began his separatist career.

The authorities of Epiphanius are not extant. Hippolytus, towards the end of the second century, wrote a *Compendium* (σύνταγμα) of heresies. Lightfoot is inclined to find this treatise in the appendix to Tertullian's *Liber de præscriptionibus adversus hæreticos*. All the *Liber* says of Marcion's fault and punishment is as follows:—

"By race a Pontic, the son of a bishop, cast off from the communion of the Church on account of the defilement of a certain virgin."

The history, as given by Epiphanius, shows Marcion (1) cast out of the Church by his father the bishop of Sinope for the sin of fornication with a Christian virgin; (2) sternly refused re-admission into the Church of Sinope; and (3) equally unsuccessful in obtaining admission to the fellowship of the Church in Rome. The history also represents Marcion as having asked at Sinope for formal Penance (μετάνοιαν). The whole narrative illustrates the sterner temper of the day.

<sup>1</sup> I have translated πρεσβύτεροι *elders*, both because it is the primary meaning of the word, and because the context lays stress on their seniority. But it may be expected that the elders who would exercise the commission of binding and loosing when the see was vacant would be presbyters.



### III. FROM A.D. 150 TO A.D. 250

#### TEXT OF AUTHORITIES

[Marcus the Gnostic, A.D. 150, notices of] S. Irenæus.

[Martyrs of Lyons, A.D. 177, notice of] Eusebius.

[Dionysius of Corinth, A.D. 171, notice of] Eusebius.

S. Clement of Alexandria (c. A.D. 150-211).

[Natalius, c. A.D. 205, notice of penance of] Eusebius.

Hippolytus (c. A.D. 160-236).

Tertullian (c. A.D. 150-230).

Canones Hippolyti.

Egyptian Church Order.

Testamentum Domini nostri Jesu Christi.

Origen (c. A.D. 185-254).

Commodianus (c. A.D. 250).

#### Notice of Marcus the Gnostic (c. A.D. 150).

[*Certain women seduced by Marcus the Gnostic in Asia, make exomologesis.*]

S. Irenæus, *Contra hæreses*.

I. xiii.

[Migne, P. G., VII. 588.]

Ὅτι δὲ φίλτρα καὶ ἀγώγιμα, πρὸς τὸ καὶ τοῖς σώμασιν αὐτῶν ἐνυβρίζειν, ἐμποιεῖ οὗτος ὁ Μάρκος ἐνταῦθα τῶν γυναικῶν, εἰ καὶ μὴ πάσαις, αὗται πολλάκις ἐπιστρέψασαι εἰς τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐξωμολογήσαντο, καὶ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα ἡχρεῶσθαι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐρωτικῶς πάνυ αὐτὸν πεφιληκέναι ὥστε καὶ διάκονόν τινα, τῶν ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ τῶν ἡμετέρων ὑποδεξάμενον αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ περιπεσεῖν ταύτῃ τῇ συμφορᾷ, τῆς γυναικὸς αὐτοῦ εὐεidoῦς ὑπαρχούσης, καὶ τὴν γνώμην, καὶ τὸ σῶμα διαφθαρείσης ὑπὸ τοῦ μάγου τούτου, καὶ ἐξακολουθησάσης αὐτῷ πολλῷ τῷ χρόνῳ· ἔπειτα μετὰ πολλοῦ κόπου τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐπιστρεψάντων, αὐτὴ τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον ἐξομολογουμένη διετελέσε, πενθοῦσα καὶ θρηνοῦσα ἐφ' ἣ ἔπαθεν ὑπὸ τοῦ μάγου διαφθορᾷ.

[*Similar exomologesis of women in the districts of the Rhone.*]

S. Irenæus, *Contra hæreses*.

I. xiii.

[Migne, P. G., VII. 592.]

Τοιαῦτα δὲ λέγοντες καὶ πράττοντες καὶ ἐν τοῖς καθ' ἡμᾶς κλίμασι τῆς Ῥοδανουσίας, πολλὰς ἐξηπατήκασιν γυναῖκας αἵτινες κεκαυτηριασμέναι τὴν

**S. Irenæus.**

συνείδησιν, αἱ μὲν καὶ εἰς φανερόν ἐξομολογοῦνται, αἱ δὲ δυσωπούμεναι τοῦτο, ἡσυχῇ δὲ πως ἑαυτὰς ἀπηλπικυῖαι τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἔναι μὲν εἰς τὸ παντελὲς ἀπέστησαν, ἔναι δὲ ἐφαμφοτερίζουσι, καὶ τὸ τῆς παροιμίας πεπόνθασι, μήτε ἔξω, μήτε ἔσω οὔσαι, ταύτην ἔχουσαι τὴν ἐπικαρπίαν τοῦ σπέρματος τῶν τέκνων τῆς γνώσεως.

[The martyrs of Lyons. Privilege of indulgence to apostates exercised by martyrs. Some apostates confessed on a second occasion, and were reckoned among the martyrs.]

Lyons and Vienne, Circular letter of the churches of (A.D. 177), in Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, V. 1.

[Migne, P. G., XX. 425.]

Διὰ γὰρ τῶν ζώντων ἐζωοποιοῦντο τὰ νεκρά, καὶ μάρτυρες τοῖς μὴ μάρτυσιν ἐχαρίζοντο. Καὶ ἐνεγίνετο πολλὴ χαρὰ τῇ παρθένῳ μητρὶ, οὗς ὡς νεκροὺς ἐξέτρωσε τούτους ζώντας ἀπολαμβάνουσιν. Δι' ἐκείνων γὰρ οἱ πλείους τῶν ἡρνημένων ἀνεμητροῦντο καὶ ἀνεκνίσκοντο καὶ ἀνεζωπυροῦντο, καὶ ἐμάνθανον ὁμολογεῖν, καὶ ζῶντες ἤδη καὶ τετονωμένοι, προσήεσαν τῷ βήματι, ἐγγλυκαίνοντος τοῦ τὸν μὲν θάνατον τοῦ ἁμαρτωλοῦ μὴ βουλομένου, ἐπὶ δὲ τὴν μετάνοιαν χρηστευομένου Θεοῦ, ἵνα καὶ πάλιν ἐπερωτηθῶσιν ὑπὸ τοῦ ἡγεμόνος· ἐπιστείλαντος γὰρ τοῦ Καίσαρος, τοὺς μὲν ἀποτυμπανισθῆναι, εἰ δέ τινες ἀρνοῦντο, τούτους ἀπολυθῆναι, τῆς ἐνθάδε πανηγύρεως (ἔστι δὲ αὕτη πολυάνθρωπος ἐκ πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν συνερχομένων εἰς αὐτήν) ἀρχομένης συνεστάναι, ἀνήγεν ἐπὶ τὸ βῆμα θεατρίζων τοὺς μακαρίους, καὶ ἐμπομπεύων τοῖς ὄχλοις. Διὸ καὶ πάλιν αἰνταζε, καὶ ὅσοι μὲν ἐδόκουν πολιτείαν Ῥωμαίων ἐσχηκέναι, τούτων ἀνέτεμνε τὰς κεφαλὰς, τοὺς δὲ λοιποὺς ἔπεμπεν εἰς θηρία. Ἐδοξάζετο δὲ μεγάλως ὁ Χριστὸς ἐπὶ τοῖς πρότερον ἀρνησαμένοις, τότε παρὰ τὴν τῶν ἐθνῶν ὑπόνοιαν ὁμολογοῦσι. Καὶ γὰρ ἰδίᾳ οὗτοι ἀνηγάζοντο, ὡς δῆθεν ἀπολυθσόμενοι. Καὶ ὁμολογοῦντες προσετίθεντο τῷ τῶν μαρτύρων κλήρῳ.

[Dionysius reconciles in cases both of grave moral offence, and of heretical error. Pinytus of Cnossus, with whom he corresponds, is stricter.]

**Dionysius of Corinth (A.D. 171).**

His letters described in Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, IV. 23.

[Migne, P. G., XX. 385.]

Καὶ τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ δὲ τῇ παροικούσῃ Ἀμαστριν ἅμα ταῖς κατὰ Πόντον ἐπιστείλας, Βαγχυλίδου μὲν καὶ Ἑλπίστου, ὡς ἂν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ γράφαι προτρεψάντων μέμνηται, Γραφῶν τε θείων ἐξηγήσεις παρατίθεται, ἐπίσκοπον αὐτῶν ὀνόματι Πάλμαν ὑποσημαίνων· πολλὰ δὲ περὶ γάμου καὶ ἀγνείας τοῖς αὐτοῖς παραινῇ. Καὶ τοὺς ἐξ οἷας δ' οὖν ἀποπτώσεως, εἴτε πλημμελείας, εἴτε μὴν αἰρετικῆς πλάνης ἐπιστρέφοντας, δεξιούσθαι προστάττει. Ταύταις ἄλλῃ ἐγκατείλεται 'πρὸς Κνωσσίους' ἐπιστολὴ ἐν ᾗ Πινυτὸν τῆς παροικίας ἐπίσκοπον παρακαλεῖ, μὴ βαρὺ φορτίον ἐπάναγκες τὸ περὶ ἀγνείας τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς



**Dionysius of Corinth.**

ἰπιτιθέναι, τῆς δὲ τῶν πολλῶν καταστοχάζεσθαι ἀσθενείας πρὸς ἣν ὁ Πινυτὸς ἀντιγράφων, θαυμάζει μὲν καὶ ἀποδέχεται τὸν Διονύσιον, ἀντιπαρακαλεῖ δὲ στεῦρότερας ἤδη ποτὲ μεταδιδόναι τροφῆς, τελειότεροις γράμμασιν εἰσαῦθις τὸν ὑπ' αὐτῷ λαὸν ὑποθρέψαντα, ὥς μὴ διατέλους τοῖς γαλακτώδεσιν ἐνδιατρίβοντες λόγοις, τῇ νηπιώδει ἀγωγῇ λάθοιεν καταγηράσαντες.

[*One μετάνοια in Baptism the normal experience. After Baptism μετάνοια δευτέρα conceded, but once only.*]

**S. Clemens Alexandrinus** (c. A.D. 150–211).

*Stromateis.*

**II. 13.**

[Migne, P. G., VIII. 993.]

Τὸν οὖν εἰληφότα τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν οὐκ ἔτι ἁμαρτάνειν χρή· ἐπὶ γὰρ τῇ πρώτῃ καὶ μόνῃ μετanoία τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὕτη ἂν εἴη τῶν προὑπαρξάντων κατὰ τὸν ἐθνικὸν καὶ πρῶτον βίον, τὸν ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ λέγω, αὐτίκα τοῖς κληθεῖσι πρόκειται μετάνοια, ἡ καθαίρουσα τὸν τόπον τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ τῶν πλημμελημάτων, ἵνα ἡ πίστις θεμελιωθῇ καρδιογνώστης δὲ ὣν ὁ Κύριος καὶ τὰ μέλλοντα προγινώσκων, τό τε ἐνμετάβολον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τὸ παλίμβανον καὶ πανοῦργον τοῦ διαβόλου, ἄνωθεν ἀρχῆθεν προεῖδεν, ὥς, ζηλώσας ἐπὶ τῇ ἀφέσει τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν τὸν ἄνθρωπον, προστρίψῃται τινὰς αἰτίας τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων τοῖς δούλοις τοῦ Θεοῦ· φρονίμως πονηρευόμενος, ὅπως δὴ καὶ αὐτοὶ συνεκπέσοιεν αὐτῷ. Ἐδωκεν οὖν ἄλλην ἐπὶ τοῖς κἂν τῇ πίστει περιπίπτουσί τινα πλημμελήματι, πολυέλεος ὢν, μετάνοιαν δευτέραν, ἣν εἴ τις ἐκπειρασθεῖη μετὰ τὴν κλῆσιν, βιασθεὶς δὲ καὶ κατασοφισθεὶς, μίαν ἔτι μετάνοιαν ἀμετανόητον λάβῃ. Ἐκουσίως γὰρ ἁμαρτανόντων ἡμῶν μετὰ τὸ λαβεῖν τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἔτι περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἀπολείπεται θυσία, φοβερὰ δὲ τις ἐκδοχὴ κρίσεως, καὶ πυρὸς ζῆλος, ἐσθίειν μέλλοντος τοὺς ὑπεναντίους.

Αἱ δὲ συνεχεῖς καὶ ἐπάλληλοι ἐπὶ τοῖς ἁμαρτήμασι μετάνοιαι, οὐδὲν τῶν καθάπαξ μὴ πεπιστευκότων διαφέρουσιν, ἢ μόνῳ τῷ συναισθῆσθαι ὅτι ἁμαρτάνουσι· καὶ οὐκ οἶδ' ὁπότερον αὐτοῖν χεῖρον, ἢ τὸ εἰδότα ἁμαρτάνειν, ἢ μετανόησαντα ἐφ' οἷς ἥμαρτεν, πλημμελεῖν αὖθις· τῷ ἐλέγκεσθαι γὰρ ἑκατέρωθεν ἡ ἁμαρτία φαίνεται, ἡ μὲν ἐπὶ τῷπραχθῆναι καταγινωσκομένη πρὸς τοῦ ἐργάτου τῆς ἀνομίας, ἡ δὲ τὸπραχθησόμενον προγινώσκοντος, ὥς φαῦλον ἐπιχειροῦντος. Καὶ ὅς μὲν θυμῷ χαρίζεται ἴσως καὶ ἡδονῇ, οὐκ ἀγνοῶν τίσι χαρίζεται, ὅς δὲ ἐφ' οἷς ἐχαρίσατο μετανοῶν, εἴτα παλινδρομῶν αὖθις εἰς ἡδονὴν, συνάπτει τῷ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐκουσίως ἐξαμαρτάνοντι· ἐφ' ᾧ γάρ τις μετανόησεν, αὖθις τοῦτο ποίῳν, οὐ πράσσει κατεγνωκῶς, τοῦτο ἐκὼν ἐπιτελεῖ. Ὁ μὲν οὖν, ἐξ ἐθνῶν καὶ τῆς προβιότητος ἐκείνης ἐπὶ τὴν πίστιν ὁρμήσας, ἀπαξ ἔτυχεν ἀφέσεως ἁμαρτιῶν· ὁ δὲ καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἁμαρτήσας, εἴτα μετανοῶν, κἂν συγγνώμης τυγχάνῃ, αἰδεῖσθαι ὀφείλει, μηκέτι λουόμενος εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν. Δεῖ γὰρ οὐ τὰ εἰδῶλα μόνον καταλιπεῖν, ἀλλὰ πρότερον ἐξεθείασεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ προτέρου βίου, τὸν οὖν ἐξ αἱμάτων, οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς, ἐν πνεύματι δὲ ἀναγεννώμενον· ὅπερ εἴη ἂν τὸ μὴ

**S. Clemens Alexandrinus.**

εἰς ταυτὸν ὑπενεχθέντα πλημμέλημα μετανοῆσαι· μελέτη γὰρ ἔμπαλιν ἁμαρτιῶν τὸ πολλάκις μετανοεῖν, καὶ ἐπιτηδειότης εἰς εὐτρεψίαν ἐξ ἀνασκησίας Δόκησις τοῖνυν μετανοίας, οὐ μετάνοια, τὸ πολλάκις αἰτεῖσθαι συγγνώμην, ἐφ' οἷς πλημμελοῦμεν πολλάκις.

[*The unfaithful wife, if penitent, has a regeneration of life.*]

II. 23.

[Migne, P. G., VIII. 1096.]

Ἡ γὰρ τοι πορνεύσασα ζῇ μὲν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, ἀπέθανε δὲ ταῖς ἐντολαῖς· ἡ δὲ μετανοήσασα, οἷον ἀναγεννηθεῖσα κατὰ τὴν ἐπιστροφὴν τοῦ βίου, παλιγγενεσίαν ἔχει ζωῆς· τεθνηκυίας μὲν τῆς πόρνῃς τῆς παλαιᾶς, εἰς βίον δὲ παρελθούσης αὐτῆς τῆς κατὰ τὴν μετάνοιαν γεννηθείσης. Μαρτυρεῖ τοῖς εἰρημένοις διὰ Ἰεζεκιὴλ τὸ Πνεῦμα, λέγον· Οὐ βούλομαι τὸν θάνατον τοῦ ἁμαρτωλοῦ, ὥς τὸ ἐπιστρέψαι.

[*The penance of Natalius.*]

**Natalius, Penance of.**

**Notice in Eusebius, Historia Ecclesiastica, V. 28.**

[Migne, P. G., XX. 513.]

Ἐπεὶ δὲ ῥαθυμότερον τοῖς ὁράμασι προσεῖχε, δελεαζόμενος τῇ τε παρ' αὐτοῖς πρωτοκαθεδρίᾳ, καὶ τῇ πλείστοις ἀπολλυούσῃ αἰσχροκερδεῖᾳ, τελευταῖον ὑπο ἀγίων ἀγγέλων ἐμαστιγώθη, δι' ὅλης τῆς νυκτὸς οὐ σμικρῶς αἰκισθεὶς ὥστε ξωθεν ἀναστῆναι, καὶ ἐνδυσάμενον σάκκον, καὶ σποδὸν καταπασάμενον, μετὰ πολλῆς σπουδῆς καὶ δακρύων προσπεσεῖν Ζεφυρίνῳ τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ, κυλιόμενον ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας οὐ μόνον τῶν ἐν τῷ κλήρῳ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν λαϊκῶν· συγχέαι τε τοῖς δάκρυσιν τὴν εὐσπλαγχνον Ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ ἐλεήμονος Χριστοῦ, πολλῇ τε τῇ δεήσει χρησάμενον, δείξαντά τε τοὺς μώλωπας ὧν εἰλήφει πληγῶν, μόλις κοινωνηθῆναι.

[*Four charges against Callistus. (1) He reconciles sinners in impurity. (2) Bishops guilty of even capital offence are not deposed. (3) Digamists are received among the clergy. (4) Clerks are allowed to marry.*]

**Hippolytus (c. A.D. 160–236), Refutatio omnium hæresium.**

[Ed. Duncker et Schneidewin, 458; Migne, P. G., XVII. 3386.]

IX. 7.

Τοιαῦτα ὁ γόης τολμήσας συνεστήσατο διδασκαλεῖον κατὰ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας οὕτως διδάξας, καὶ πρῶτος τὰ πρὸς τὰς ἡδονὰς τοῖς ἀνθρώποις συγχωρεῖν ἐπενόησε, λέγων πᾶσιν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἀφίεσθαι ἁμαρτίας. Ὁ γὰρ παρ' ἐτέρῳ τινὶ συναγόμενος καὶ λεγόμενος Χριστιανὸς εἴ τι ἂν ἁμάρτη, φασὶν, οὐ λογίζεται αὐτῷ ἡ ἁμαρτία, εἰ προσδράμοι τῇ τοῦ Καλλίστου σχολῇ. Οὐ τῷ ὄρφ ἀρεσκόμενοι πολλοὶ συνείδησιν πεπληγότες ἅμα τε καὶ ὑπὸ πολλῶν αἰρέσεων ἀποβληθέντες, τινὲς δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ καταγνώσει ἔκβλητοι τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὑφ' ἡμῶν



**Hippolytus.**

γενόμενοι, προσχωρήσαντες αὐτοῖς ἐπλήθυναν τὸ διδασκαλεῖον αὐτοῦ. Οὗτος ἐδογματίσεν ὅπως εἰ ἐπίσκοπος ἁμάρτοι τι, εἰ καὶ πρὸς θάνατον, μὴ δεῖν κατατίθεσθαι. Ἐπὶ τούτου ἤρξαντο ἐπίσκοποι καὶ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ διάκονοι δίγαμοι καὶ τρίγαμοι καθίστασθαι εἰς κλήρους· εἰ δὲ καὶ τις ἐν κλήρῳ ὢν γαμοίῃ, μένειν τὸν τοιοῦτον ἐν τῷ κλήρῳ ὥς μὴ ἡμαρτηκότα· ἐπὶ τούτῳ φάσκων εἰρῆσθαι τὸ ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἀποστόλου ρηθέν. Σὺ τίς εἶ ὁ κρίνων ἀλλότριον οἰκέτην; Ἀλλὰ καὶ παραβολὴν τῶν ζιζανίων πρὸς τοῦτο ἔφη λέγεσθαι. Ἀφετε τὰ ζιζάνια συναύξειν τῷ σίτῳ τουτέστιν ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ τοὺς ἁμαρτάνοντας.

[*The acceptance of the sinful by Callistus.*]

*Refutatio omnium hæresium.*

[*Ed. Duncker et Schneidewin, 460; Migne, P. G., XVII. 3386.*]

**IX. 7.**

Ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν κιβωτὸν τοῦ Νῶε εἰς ὁμοίωμα Ἐκκλησίας ἔφη γεγονέναι, ἐν ᾗ καὶ κύνες καὶ λύκοι καὶ κόρακες καὶ πάντα τὰ καθαρὰ καὶ ἀκάθαρτα· οὕτω φάσκων δεῖν εἶναι ἐν Ἐκκλησίᾳ ὁμοίως· καὶ ὅσα πρὸς τοῦτο δυνατὸς ἦν συνάγειν οὕτως ἡρμήνευσεν, οὗ οἱ ἀκροαταὶ ἡσθέντες τοῖς δόγμασι διαμένουσιν ἐμπαίζοντες ἑαυτοῖς τε καὶ πολλοῖς, ὧν τῷ διδασκαλείῳ συνῥρέουσιν ὄχλοι. Διὸ καὶ πληθύνονται, γαυριώμενοι ἐπὶ ὄχλοις διὰ τὰς ἡδονὰς, ἃς οὐ συνεχώρησεν ὁ Χριστός· οὗ καταφρονήσαντες οὐδὲν ἁμαρτεῖν κωλύουσι, φάσκοντες αὐτὸν ἀφιέναι τοῖς εὐδοκοῦσι.

[*The penitence preceding Baptism may find forgiveness for any sin.*]

**Tertullian** (c. A.D. 150–230), *De Pœnitentia*.

**C. iv.**

[*Migne, P. L., I. 1233.*]

Omnibus ergo delictis seu carne, seu spiritu, seu facto, seu voluntate commissis, qui pœnam per iudicium destinavit, idem et veniam per pœnitentiam spopondit, dicens ad populum, *Pœnitere, et salvum faciam te. Vivo*, inquit Dominus, *et pœnitentiam malo quam mortem*. Ergo pœnitentia vita est cum præponitur morti. Eam tu peccator, mei similis (imo me minor, ego enim præstantiam in delictis meam agnosco) ita invade, ita amplexare, ut naufragus alicujus tabulæ fidem.

[*The penitence of Baptism ought not to be cancelled by an iteration of offence.*]

**C. v.**

[*Migne, P. L., I. 1234.*]

Hoc enim dico, pœnitentiam quæ per Dei gratiam ostensa et indicta nobis, in gratiam nos Domino revocat, semel cognitam atque susceptam nunquam post hoc iteratione delicti resignari oportere.

**Tertullian.**

[*The open door of the one penitence after Baptism not to encourage sin.*]

C. vii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, I. 1240.]

Piget secundæ, imo jam ultimæ spei subtexere mentionem, ne retractantes de residuo auxilio pœnitendi, spatium adhuc delinquendi demonstrare videamur. Absit ut aliquis ita interpretetur, quasi eo sibi etiam nunc pateat ad delinquendum, quia patet ad pœnitendum; et redundantia clementiæ cœlestis, libidinem faciat humanæ temeritatis.

[*One only penance after Baptism open.*]

C. vii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, I. 1241.]

Hæc igitur venena ejus providens Deus, clausa licet ignoscentiæ janua, et intinctionis sera obstructa, aliquid adhuc permisit patere. Collocavit in vestibulo pœnitentiam secundam, quæ pulsantibus patefaciat: sed jam semel, quia jam secundo. Sed amplius nunquam, quia proxime frustra. Non enim et hoc semel satis est? Habes, quod non merebaris; amisisti enim quod acceperas. Si tibi indulgentia Domini accommodat, unde restituas quod amiseras, iterato beneficio gratus esto, nedum ampliato: majus est enim restituere quam dare: quoniam miserius est perdidisse quam omnino non accepisse. Verum non statim succidendus ac subruendus est animus desperatione, si secundæ quis pœnitentiæ debitor fuerit: pigeat sane peccare rursus, sed rursus pœnitere non pigeat; pigeat iterum periclitari, sed non iterum liberari. Neminem pudeat; iteratæ valetudinis iteranda medicina est: gratus in Domino exstiteris, si quod tibi Dominus offert, non recusaveris: offendisti, sed reconciliari adhuc potes. Habes cui satisfacias, et quidem volentem.

[*Description of Exomologesis.*]

C. ix.

[Migne, *P. L.*, I. 1243.]

Hujus igitur pœnitentiæ secundæ et unius, quanto in arcto negotium est, tanto operosior probatio, ut non sola conscientia proferatur, sed aliquo etiam actu administretur. Is actus, qui magis greco vocabulo exprimitur et frequentatur, Exomologesis est, qua delictum Domino nostrum confitemur: non quidem ut ignaro, sed quatenus satisfactio confessione disponitur, confessione pœnitentia nascitur, pœnitentia Deus mitigatur. Itaque Exomologesis prosternendi et humilificandi hominis disciplina est, conversationem injungens misericordiæ illicem; de ipso quoque habitu atque victu mandat, sacco et cineri incubare, corpus sordibus obscurare, animum mœroribus dejicere, illa quæ peccavit tristi tractatione mutare; cæterum pastum et potum pura nosse, non ventris scilicet, sed animæ caussa: plerumque vero jejuniis preces



**Tertullian.**

alere, ingemiscere, lacrymari, et mugire dies noctesque ad Dominum Deum tuum, presbyteris advolvi, et caris Dei adgeniculari, omnibus fratribus legationes deprecationis suæ injungere. Hæc omnia Exomologesis, ut pœnitentiam commendet, ut de periculi timore Dominum honoret, ut in peccatorem ipsa pronuntians pro Dei indignatione fungatur, et temporali afflictatione æterna supplicia non dicam frustretur, sed expungat. Cum igitur provolvit hominem, magis relevat: cum squalidum facit, magis mundatum reddit: cum accusat, cum condemnat, absolvit. In quantum non peperceris tibi, in tantum tibi Deus, crede, parcet.

[*The avoidance of penance by persons in sin.*]

C. x.

[Migne, *P. L.*, I. 1244.]

Plerosque tamen hoc opus, ut publicationem sui, aut suffugere, aut de die in diem differre, præsumo; pudoris magis memores quam salutis: velut illi, qui in partibus verecundioribus contracta vexatione, conscientiam medentium vitant, et ita cum erubescencia sua pereunt. Intolerandum scilicet pudori, Domino offenso satisfacere, saluti prodictæ reformari. Næ tu verecundia bonus, ad delinquendum expandens frontem, ad deprecandum vero subducens.

[*The folly of withholding penance.*]

C. x.

[Migne, *P. L.*, I. 1245.]

In uno et altero Ecclesia est, Ecclesia vero Christus. Ergo cum te ad fratrum genua protendis, Christum contrectas, Christum exoras. Æque illi cum super te lacrymas agunt, Christus patitur, Christus Patrem deprecatur. Facile impetratur semper, quod filius postulat. Grande plane emolumentum verecundiæ occultatio delicti pollicetur. Videlicet si quid humanæ notitiæ subduxerimus, proinde et Deum celabimus. Adeone existimatio hominum et Dei conscientia comparantur. An melius est damnatum latere, quam palam absolvi. Miserum est sic ad Exomologesin pervenire. Malo enim ad miseriam pervenitur, sed ubi pœnitendum est deserit miserum: quia factum est salutare.

[*Externals of penance.*]

C. xi.

[Migne, *P. L.*, I. 1246.]

Quid si præter pudorem, quem potiolem putant, etiam incommoda corporis reformident, quod inlotos, quod sordulentos, quod extra lætitiâ oportet deversari, in asperitudine sacci, et horrore cineris, et oris de jejunio vanitate.

**Tertullian.**

[*What is exomologesis compared with hell? After Baptism exomologesis affords a second aid.*]

C. xii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, I. 1247.]

Si de exomologesi retractas, gehennam in corde considera, quam tibi exomologesis exstinguit : et pœnæ prius magnitudinem imaginare, ut de remedii adeptione non dubites.

Igitur cum scias adversus gehennam post prima illa intinctionis dominicæ munimenta, esse adhuc in exomologesi secunda subsidia cur salutem tuam deseris? Cur cessas aggredi, quod scias mederi tibi.

[*The "edict" of Callistus.*]

*De Pudicitia.*

C. i.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 980.]

Audio etiam edictum esse propositum, et quidem peremptorium, Pontifex scilicet maximus, quod est Episcopus Episcoporum, edicit : "Ego et mœchiæ et fornicationis delicta pœnitentia functis dimitto." O edictum, cui adscribi non poterit, Bonum factum. Et ubi proponetur liberalitas ista? Ibidem, opinor, in ipsis libidinum januis, sub ipsis libidinum titulis. Illic ejusmodi pœnitentia promulganda est, ubi delinquentia ipsa versabitur; illic legenda est venia, quo cum spe ejus intrabitur. Sed hoc in Ecclesia legitur, et in Ecclesia pronuntiatur, et virgo est.

[*The purity of the primitive discipline.*]

C. i.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 982.]

Atque utinam et isti qui meram et veram integritatem carnis obtruncant, amputantes non summam superficiem, sed intimam effigiem pudoris ipsius, cum mœchis et fornicatoribus veniam pollicentur adversus principalem christiani nominis disciplinam, quam ipsum quoque sæculum usque adeo testatur, ut, si quando, eam in fœminis nostris inquinamentis potius carnis quam tormentis punire contendat, id volens eripere quod vitæ antepo-  
nant.

[*Adultery and fornication cannot be classed at once as moderate and as capital sins.*]

C. i.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 983.]

Nec enim mœchia et fornicatio de modicis et de maximis delictis deputabuntur, ut utrumque competat, et sollicitudo quæ præcavet, et securitas quæ indulget. Sed cum ea sint quæ culmen criminum teneant, non capit et indulgeri quasi modica, et præcaveri quasi maxima.



**Tertullian.**[*Strictness of the Montanists.*]

C. i.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 983.]

Nobis autem maxima aut summa sic quoque præcaventur, dum nec secundas quidem post fidem nuptias permittitur nosse, nuptialibus et dotalibus si forte tabulis a mœchiæ et fornicationis opere diversas. Et ideo durissime nos infamantes Paracletum disciplinæ enormitate digamos foris sistimus, eundem limitem liminis mœchis quoque et fornicatoribus figimus, jejunas pacis lacrymas profusuris, nec amplius ab Ecclesia quam publicationem dedecoris relaturis.

[*Distinction between remissible and irremissible sins.*]

C. ii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 985.]

Causa pœnitentiæ delicta condicimus. Hæc dividimus in duos exitus: alia erunt remissibilia, alia irremissibilia; secundum quod nemini dubium est, alia castigationem mereri, alia damnationem. Omne delictum aut venia expungit aut pœna: venia, ex castigatione; pœna ex damnatione. De ista differentia jam et quasdam præmisimus altercationes Scripturarum, hinc retinentium, hinc dimittentium delicta. Sed et Joannes docebit: *Si quis scit fratrem suum delinquere delictum non ad mortem, postulabit, et dabitur vita ei*; quia non ad mortem delinquit: hoc erit remissibile. *Est delictum ad mortem: non pro illo dico ut quis postulet*: hoc erit irremissibile. Ita, ubi est conditio vel ratio postulationis, illic etiam remissionis: ubi nec postulationis, ibi æque nec remissionis. Secundum hanc differentiam delictorum, pœnitentiæ quoque conditio discriminatur. Alia erit quæ veniam consequi possit, in delicto scilicet remissibili; alia quæ consequi nullo modo possit, in delicto scilicet irremissibili. Et superest specialiter de mœchiæ et fornicationis statu examinare, in quam delictorum partem debeant redigi.

[*Penance not in vain because lacking present absolution. They who claim to absolve hold it to be in vain.*]

C. iii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 986.]

Porro frustra agetur si venia carebit. Merito utique ita opponunt, quoniam hujus quoque pœnitentiæ fructum, id est veniam, in sua potestate usurpaverunt. Quantum enim ad illos a quibus pacem humanam consequitur: quantum autem ad nos, qui solum Dominum meminimus delicta concedere et utique mortalia, non frustra agetur.

[*The pardon of God remains open; though not that of the Church.*]

C. iii.

Ad Dominum enim remissa, et illi exinde prostrata, hoc ipso magis operabitur veniam quod eam a solo Deo exorat, quod

**Tertullian.**

delicto suo humanam pacem sufficere non credat, quod Ecclesiæ mavult erubescere quam communicare. Adsistit enim pro foribus ejus, et de notæ suæ exemplo cæteros admonet, et lacrymas fratrum sibi quoque advocat, et redit plus utique negotiata, compassionem scilicet quam communicationem. Et si pacem hic non metit, apud Dominum seminat: nec amittit, sed præparat fructum: non vacabit ab emolumento, si non vacaverit ab officio. Ita nec pœnitentia hujusmodi vana, nec disciplina ejusmodi dura est. Deum ambæ honorant; illa, nihil sibi blandiendo facilius impetrabit, ista nihil sibi adsumendo plenius adjuvabit.

[*Why not idolaters and homicides as well as adulterers?*]

C. v.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 989.]

Si res voce deficiunt, adsistit idololatriæ, adsistit homicidæ, in medio eorum adsistit et mœchus, pariter de pœnitentiæ officio sedent in sacco, et cinere inhorrescunt, eodem flatu gemiscunt, eisdem precibus ambiunt, eisdem genibus exorant, eandem invocant matrem. Quid agis, mollissima et humanissima disciplina? aut omnibus eis hoc esse debebis: *beati enim pacifici*; aut si non omnibus, nostra esse.

[*The Roman practice in the time of Tertullian: adulterers reconciled, idolaters and homicides not.*]

C. v.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 989.]

Idolatram quidem et homicidam semel damnas, mœchum vero de medio excipis, idololatriæ successorem, homicidæ antecessorem, utriusque collegam.

[*Sins of minor gravity open to absolution.*]

C. vii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 993.]

Ita licet dici perisse, quod salvum est, Perit igitur et fidelis elapsus in spectaculum quadrigarii furoris, et gladiatorii cruoris, et scenicæ fœditatis, et xysticæ vanitatis, in lusus, in convivia sæcularis solemnitatis, in officium, in ministerium alienæ idololatriæ aliquas artes adhibuit curiositatis; in verbum ancipitis negationis aut blasphemiae impegit, ob tale quid extra gregem datus est, vel et ipse forte ira, tumore, æmulatione, quod denique sæpe fit, dedignatione castigationis abruptit, debet requiri atque revocari. Quod potest recuperari non <sup>1</sup> perit nisi foris perseveraverit.

[*Adultery not a drachma but a talent.*]

C. vii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 994.]

Juxta drachmæ quoque exemplum; etiam intra domum Dei Ecclesiam, licet esse aliqua delicta pro ipsius drachmæ modulo

<sup>1</sup> Migne has *aperit*.



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ac pondere mediocria, quæ ibidem delitescencia mox ibidem et reperta, statim ibidem cum gaudio emendationis transigantur. Mœchiæ vero et fornicationis non drachma, sed talentum, quibus exquirendis, non lucernæ spiculi lumine, sed totius solis lancea opus est. Simul apparuit, statim homo de Ecclesia expellitur, nec illic manet, nec gaudium confert repertrici Ecclesiæ, sed luctum; nec congratulationem advocat vicinarum, sed contristationem proximarum fraternitatum.

[*Callistus restores the prodigal his robe and ring. May not apostates claim the same?*]

C. ix.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 997.]

Quis enim timebit prodigere quod habebit postea recuperari? quis curabit perpetuo conservare quod non perpetuo poterit amittere. Securitas delicti etiam libido est ejus. Recuperabit igitur et apostata vestem priorem, indumentum Spiritus Sancti, et annulum denuo signaculum lavacri, et rursus illi mactabitur Christus. . . .

[*Martyrdom alone can restore the capital offender here.*]

C. ix.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 999.]

Denique, si aliorum parabolas transducere liceret, ad martyrium potius dirigeremus spem illarum, quod solum omni substantia producta restituere filium poterit, et drachmam inter omnia, licet in stercore repertam, cum gaudio prædicabit, et ovem per aspera quæque et abrupta fugitivam humeris ipsius Domini in gregem referet.

[*The Shepherd of Hermas ("who loves adulterers").*]

C. x.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 1000.]

Sed cederem tibi, si scriptura Pastoris, quæ sola mœchos amat, divino instrumento meruisset incidi, si non ab omni concilio Ecclesiarum etiam vestrarum inter apocrypha et falsa judicaretur, adultera et ipsa, et inde patrona sociorum; a qua et alias initiaris.

[*Certain absolutions of our Lord lawful to our Lord alone.*]

C. xi.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 1001.]

Exinde, quod ad Evangelium pertinet; parabolarum quidem discussa jam quæstio est. Si vero et factis aliquid tale pro peccatoribus edidit Dominus, ut cum peccatrici fœminæ etiam corporis sui contactum permittit lavanti lacrymis pedes ejus et crinibus detergenti, et unguento sepulturam ipsius inauguranti; ut cum Samaritanæ sexto jam matrimonio, non mœchæ, sed prostitutæ, etiam, quod nemini facile, quis esset ostendit, nihil

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ex hoc adversariis confertur, etsi jam Christianis veniam delictorum præstitisset. Nunc enim dicimus, soli Domino hoc licet, hodie potestas indulgentiæ ejus operetur.

[*The council of Jerusalem specifies the three irremissible sins.*]

(Note the reading: *πνικτῶν* is omitted. Tertullian understands that αἵματος = homicide.)

C. xii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 1002.]

*Visum est, inquit, Spiritui Sancto et nobis, nullum amplius vobis adjicere pondus, quam eorum a quibus necesse est abstineri, a sacrificiis, et a fornicationibus et sanguine, a quibus observando recte agitis, vectante vos Spiritu Sancto. Sufficit et hic servatum esse mœchiæ et fornicationi locum honoris sui inter idololatriam et homicidium: interdictum enim sanguinis multo magis humani intelligemus. Porro qualia videri volunt Apostoli crimina, quæ sola in observatione de lege pristina excerpunt, quæ sola necessario abstinenda præscribunt? Non quod alia permittant, sed quod hæc sola proponant utique non remissibilia, qui, ethnicorum caussa, cætera legis onera remissibilia fecerunt.*

[*Description of the penance exacted by Catholics for adultery.*]

C. xiii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 1003.]

Et tu quidem pœnitentiam mœchi ad exorandam fraternitatem in ecclesiam inducens, concilicium et concineratum cum dedecore et horrore compositum prosternis in medium ante viduas, ante presbyteros, omnium lacinias invadentem, omnium vestigia lambentem, omnium genua detinentem.

[*The laxists affirm that the "destruction of the flesh" assigned to the Corinthian was penance with a view to restoration.*]

C. xiii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 1004.]

Hic jam carnis interitum in officium pœnitentiæ interpretantur, quod videatur jejuniis et sordibus et incuria omni et dedita opera malæ tractationis carnem exterminando satis Deo facere; ut ex hoc argumententur fornicatorem, imo incestum illum, non in perditionem Satanæ ab Apostolo traditum, sed in emendationem, quasi postea veniam ob interitum, id est conflictationem carnis, consecuturum, igitur et consecutum.

[*The purpose of the clemency of Callistus.*]

C. xviii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 1016.]

Quid si et hic respondere concipias adimi quidem peccatoribus, vel maxime carne pollutis, communicationem, sed ad præsens restituendam, scilicet ex pœnitentiæ ambitu, secundum illam clementiam Dei qua mavult peccatoris pœnitentiam quam mortem,



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hoc enim fundamentum opinionis vestræ usquequaque pulsandum est. Dicimus itaque, clementiæ divinæ si ita esse competisset demonstrationem sui etiam post fidem lapsis, ita Apostolus diceret : *Nolite communicare operibus tenebrarum*, nisi pœnitentiam egerint; et *Cum talibus ne cibum quidem sumere*, nisi posteaquam caligas fratrum volutando deteraserint; et *Qui templum Dei vitia-verit, vitiabit illum Deus*, nisi omnium focorum cineres in ecclesia de capite suo excusserit.

[*Distinction of the offences of Christians. Some are remissible by the bishop; some by God only.*]

C. xviii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 1017.]

Ita clementia illa Dei, malentis pœnitentiam peccatoris quam mortem, ad ignorantes adhuc et adhuc incredulos spectat, quorum caussa liberandorum venerit Christus, non qui jam Deum norint, et sacramentum didicerint fidei. Quod si clementia Dei ignorantibus adhuc et infidelibus competit, utique et pœnitentia ad se clementiam invitat, salva illa pœnitentiæ specie post fidem, quæ aut levioribus delictis veniam ab episcopo consequi poterit, aut majoribus et irremissibilibus a Deo solo.

[*Penance is proper for an adulteress (the Jezebel of Rev. ii. 20); but pardon is reserved to God.*]

C. xix.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 1018.]

Aut si certus es mulierem illam, post fidem vivam, in hæresin postea exspirasse, ut non quasi hæreticæ, sed quasi fideli peccatrici, veniam ex pœnitentia vindices, sane agat pœnitentiam, sed in finem mœchiæ, non tamen et restitutionem consecutura. Hæc enim erit pœnitentia, quam et nos deberi quidem agnoscimus multo magis, sed de venia Deo reservamus.

[*A contrasted enumeration of (a) minor and (b) capital sins.*]

C. xix.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 1020.]

Et hic enim illam Joannes commendavit, quod sint quædam delicta quotidianæ incursionis, quibus omnes simus objecti. Cui enim non accidit, aut irasci inique, et ultra solis occasum; aut et manum immittere, aut facile maledicere, aut temere jurare, aut fidem pacti destruere : aut verecundia aut necessitate mentiri? in negotiis, in officiis, in quæstu, in victu, in visu, in auditu quanta tentamur, ut si nulla sit venia istorum, nemini salus competat! Horum ergo erit venia per exoratorem Patris Christum. Sunt autem et contraria istis, ut graviora et exitiosa, quæ veniam non capiant, homicidium, idololatria, fraus, negatio, blasphemia, utique et mœchia et fornicatio, et si qua alia violatio templi Dei. Horum ultra exorator non erit Christus; hæc non

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admittet omnino qui natus ex Deo fuerit, non futurus Dei filius, si admiserit.

[*Epistle to Hebrews ascribed to Barnabas, and quoted as forbidding reconciliation.*]

C. xx.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 1021.]

Exstat enim Barnabæ titulus ad Hebræos, adeo satis auctoritatis viro, ut quam Paulus juxta se constituerit in abstinentiæ tenore : *Aut ego solus et Barnabas non habemus hoc operandi potestatem?*

Et utique receptior apud Ecclesias Epistola Barnabæ illo apocrypho Pastore mœchorum. Monens itaque discipulos, omissis omnibus initiis, ad perfectionem magis tendere, nec rursus fundamenta pœnitentiæ jacere ab operibus mortuorum : *Impossibile est enim, inquit, eos qui semel illuminati sunt, et donum cœleste gustaverunt . . . rursus revocari in pœnitentiam. . . .*

Hoc qui ab Apostolis didicit et cum Apostolis docuit, nunquam mœcho et fornicatori secundam pœnitentiam promissam ab Apostolis norat; optime enim legem interpretabatur, et figuras ejus jam in ipsa veritate servabat.

[*Mortal sins can be pardoned by God only.*]

C. xxi.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 1023.]

Quis autem poterat donare delicta? hoc solius ipsius est. Quis enim dimittit delicta, ni solus Deus? et utique mortalia quæ in ipsum fuerint admissa et in templum ejus; nam tibi quæ in te reatum habeant, etiam septuagies septies juberis indulgere in persona Petri.

[*The power of the Church.*]

C. xxi.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 1024.]

Sed habet, inquis, potestatem Ecclesia delicta donandi. Hoc ego magis et agnosco et dispono qui ipsum Paracletum in prophetis novis habeo dicentem : Potest Ecclesia donare delictum, sed non faciam, ne et alia delinquant.

[*Binding and loosing personal to S. Peter.*]

C. xxi.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 1025.]

De tua nunc sententia quæro, unde hoc jus Ecclesiæ usurpes. Si quia dixerit Petro Dominus : *Super hanc petram ædificabo Ecclesiam meam; tibi dedi claves regni cœlestis, vel: Quæcumque alligaveris vel solveris in terra, erunt alligata vel soluta in cœlis;* idcirco præsumis et ad te derivasse solvendi et alligandi potestatem, id est ad omnem Ecclesiam Petri propinquam, qualis es



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evertens atque commutans manifestam Domini intentionem personaliter hoc Petro conferentem: *Super te*, inquit *ædificabo Ecclesiam meam*; et, *Dabo tibi claves*, non Ecclesiæ; et, *Quæcumque solveris vel alligaveris*, non quæ solverint vel alligaverint.

[*St. Peter's commission did not refer to reserved sins.*]

C. xxi.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 1025.]

Sic et in illa disceptatione custodiendæ necne legis, primus omnium Petrus Spiritu instinctus, et de nationum vocatione præfatus: *Et nunc*, inquit, *cur tentatis Dominum de imponendo iugo fratribus quod neque nos neque patres nostri sufferre valuerunt. Sed enim per gratiam Jesu credimus nos salutem consecuturos sicut et illi.* Hæc sententia et solvit quæ omissa sunt legis, et alligavit quæ reservata sunt. Adeo nihil ad delicta fidelium capitalia potestas solvendi et alligandi Petro emancipata. Cui si præceperat Dominus etiam septuagies delinquenti in eum fratri indulgere; utique nihil postea alligare, id est retinere, mandasset, nisi forte ea quæ in Dominum, non in fratrem quis admiserit; præjudicatur enim non dimittenda in Deum delicta, eum in homine admissa donantur.

[*What is the Church, which has the power? The Church of the Spirit, spiritual persons, not merely bishops.*]

C. xxi.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 1026.]

Nam et Ecclesia proprie et principaliter ipse est Spiritus in quo est trinitas unius divinitatis, Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus. Illam Ecclesiam congregat, quam Dominus in tribus posuit. Atque ita exinde etiam numerus omnis qui in hanc fidem conspiraverint, Ecclesia ab auctore et consecratore censetur. Et ideo Ecclesia quidem delicta donabit: sed Ecclesia Spiritus per spiritalem hominem, non ecclesia numerus episcoporum: Domini enim, non famuli, est jus et arbitrium; Dei ipsius, non sacerdotis.

[*Reconciliation allowed by Callistus to be exercised by martyrs also.*]

C. xxii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 1026.]

At tu jam et in martyras tuos effundis hanc potestatem, ut quisque ex consensione vincula induit adhuc mollia, in novo custodiæ nomine, statim ambiunt mœchi, statim adeunt fornicatores, jam preces circumsonant, jam lacrymæ circumstagnant maculati cujusque; nec ulli magis aditum carceris redimunt, quam qui Ecclesiam perdiderunt.

**Tertullian.**

[*Martyrs have no authority to remit reserved sins.*]

C. xxii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 1027.]

Put a nunc sub gladio jam capite librato, puta in patibulo jam corpore expanso, puta in stipite jam leone concesso, puta in axe, jam incendio adstructo, in ipsa, dico, securitate et possessione martyrii, quis permittit homini donare quæ Deo reservanda sunt? a quo ea sine excusatione damnata sunt; quæ nec apostoli, quod sciam, martyres et ipsi, donabilia judicaverunt. Denique jam ad bestias depugnaverat Paulus Ephesi cum interitum decernit incesto. Sufficiat martyri propria delicta purgasse. Ingrati vel superbi est in alios quoque spargere quod pro magno fuerit consecutus. Quis alienam mortem sua solvit, nisi solus Dei Filius.

[*Callistus expects pardon for adulterers from the martyrs.*]

C. xxii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 1028.]

Cum tamen mœchis et fornicatoribus a martyre expostulas veniam, ipse confiteris ejusmodi crimina nonnisi proprio martyrio diluenda, qui præsumis alieno.

[*But the martyrs might also reconcile the murderer and the idolater, which is absurd.*]

C. xxii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 1028.]

Quæcumque auctoritas, quæcumque ratio mœcho et fornicatori pacem ecclesiasticam reddit, eadem debet et homicidæ et idololatræ pœnitentibus subvenire, certe negatori, et utique illi quem in prælio confessionis tormentis colluctatum sævitia dejecit. Cæterum, indignum Deo et illius misericordia, qui pœnitentiam peccatoris morti prævertit, ut facilius in Ecclesiam redeant, qui subando, quam qui dimicando ceciderunt.

[*The martyrs' prerogative of intervention.*]

*Ad Martyres.*

1.

[Migne, *P. L.*, I. 621.]

Quam pacem quidam in Ecclesia non habentes a martyribus in carcere exorare consueverunt. Et ideo eam etiam propterea in vobis habere et fovere et custodire debetis, ut si forte et aliis præstare possitis.

[*A list of seven capital sins.*]

*Adversus Marcionem.*

IV. 9.

[Migne, *P. L.*, II. 375.]

Significato per nationes emundationis in Christo lumine earum, quæ septem maculis capitalium delictorum inhorrerent, idololatria, blasphemia, homicidio, adulterio, stupro, falso testimonio, fraude.



[*Prayer at consecration of a bishop for power to remit sins.*]

**Canones Hippolyti.**

[Achelis, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, vi. 4, p. 46, Leipzig, 1891.]

iii. 17.

Tribue etiam illi, o Domine, episcopatum et spiritum clementem et potestatem ad remittenda peccata; et tribue illi facultatem ad dissolvenda omnia vincula iniquitatis dæmonum, et ad sanandos omnes morbos, et contere satanam sub pedibus ejus velociter, per dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, per quem tibi gloria cum ipso et spiritu sancto in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

[*An artificer not to make articles for idolatrous worship. If after Baptism he make such, he is to be excommunicated till he do penance.*]

xi.

[Achelis, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, vi. 4.]

65. Omnis artifex noverit, sibi nullo modo licere idolum vel aliquam figuram idololatricam effingere, sive sit aurifaber, sive argentarius, sive pictor, sive alius generis artifex.

66. Si quis autem artifex post baptismum receptum inveniatur, qui ejusmodi rem confecerit, exceptis iis rebus quæ ad usum hominum pertinent, excommunicetur donec pœnitentiam agat.

[*Bloodshed by a baptized soldier to involve exclusion from communion till he have proved by mourning a change of conduct.*]

xiv.

[Achelis, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, vi. 4.]

74. Christianus ne fiat propria voluntate miles, nisi sit coactus a duce. Habeat gladium, caveat tamen, ne criminis sanguinis effusi fiat reus.

75. Si compertum est, sanguinem ab eo esse effusum, a participatione mysteriorum abstineat, nisi forte singulari conversione morum cum lacrimis et planetu correctus erit. Attamen ejus donum ne sit fictum, sed cum timore Dei.

[*A list of sins which bar Baptism till they are forsaken, and which in a baptized person involve expulsion till the person have done penance with weeping, fasting, and works of mercy.*]

xv.

[Achelis, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, vi. 4.]

76. Fornicator vel qui quæstum ex fornicatione quærit, vel cinædus, imprimis autem qui mendacia dicit, deinde omnis socors, vel οἰωνιστής, vel magus, vel astrologus, hariolus, somniorum interpres, præstigiator, concinator [qui plebem ad turbas seditionesque commonet] vel qui phylacteria conficit, usurarius, injuriosus vel amator mundi, qui juramentis delectatur, [qualicumque sint sacramenta] qui offensiones dat hominibus, vel fceneratur, vel homines contemnit, vel horas diesque præeligit,

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quasdam esse infaustas—hi omnes et qui similes sunt his neque instruendi neque baptisandi sunt, donec ab omnibus talibus operibus abstineant. . . .

79. Quodsi post baptismum in illa, quæ significavimus, criminosa flagitia relapsi inveniuntur, ex ecclesia expellantur, donec pœnitentiam egerint cum fletu, jejunio, et operibus misericordiæ.

[*Prayer at the consecration of a bishop that he may have the power to remit sin and to loose bonds.*]

**Egyptian Church Order** (Dr. Leutholf's German translation from the Coptic).

[Achelis, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, vi. 4, p. 46.]

Dass er, wie sich's gebühret, darbringe das Opfer deiner heiligen Kirche und im heiligen Geiste des Priesteramtes, ausgestattet mit der Gewalt, Sünden zu vergeben nach deinem Befehl, Ordinationen zu vollziehen nach deiner Anordnung, und zu lösen alle Bande der Mühsal kraft der Gewalt, die du deinen Aposteln gegeben hast.

[*Prayer at the consecration of a bishop for power to loose bonds, as the Apostles.*]

**Testamentum Domini nostri Jesu Christi** (*edidit (syriace), latine reddidit, et illustravit Ignatius Ephraim II. Rahmani, patriarcha antiochenus syrorum. Moguntiae, 1899.* [p. 31.]

**Lib. I. De institutione episcopi.**

Impertire ei, ut habeat tuum Spiritum pollentem potestate ad solvenda omnia ligamina, quemadmodum apostolis tuis concessisti.

[*The Apostles are empowered to remit the sins which God remits: but they are to retain ἀνιάτα.*]

**Origen** (c. A.D. 185–254), *De Oratione*.

28.

[Migne, *P. G.*, XI. 528.]

Πάντες μέντοιγε ἐξουσίαν ἀφίεναι τὰ εἰς ἡμᾶς ἡμαρτημένα· ὅπερ δὴλόν ἐστιν ἐκ τε τοῦ Ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφίεμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ Καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἀφίεμεν παντὶ ὀφείλοντι ἡμῖν. Ὁ δὲ ἐμπνευσθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ὡς οἱ ἀπόστολοι, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν καρπῶν γινώσκεσθαι δυνάμενος, ὡς χωρήσας τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, καὶ γενόμενος πνευματικὸς τῷ ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος ἄγεσθαι τρόπον υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐφ' ἕκαστον τῶν κατὰ λόγον πρακτέων, ἀφίησιν ἂν εἰς ἀφῆ ὁ Θεὸς, καὶ κρατεῖ τὰ ἀνιάτα τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων· ὑπηρετῶν, ὥσπερ οἱ προφῆται ἐν τῷ λέγειν οὐ τὰ ἴδια, ἀλλὰ τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ βουλήματος τῷ Θεῷ, οὕτω καὶ αὐτὸς τῷ μόνῳ ἐξουσίαν ἔχοντι ἀφίεναι Θεῷ. Ἐχουσι δὲ ἐν τῷ κατὰ Ἰωάννην Ἐυαγγελίῳ αἱ περὶ τῆς τῶν ἀποστόλων γινομένης ἀφίσεως φωναὶ οὕτως· Λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον· ἃν τινων ἀφίετε τὰς



## Origen.

ἀμαρτίας, ἀφίενται αὐτοῖς, ἂν τινων κρατῇτε, κεκράτηνται. Εἰ δέ τις ἀβασανίστως ἐκλαμβάνει ταῦτα, ἐγκαλέσας τις ἂν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις μὴ πᾶσιν ἀφιεῖσιν, ἵνα πᾶσιν ἀφεθῇ, ἀλλὰ τινων τὰς ἀμαρτίας κρατοῦσιν, ὡς δι' αὐτοὺς καὶ παρὰ Θεῷ κρατεῖσθαι αὐτάς.

[The priests of the old law were forbidden to offer sacrifices for the gravest sins.]

28.

[Migne, P. G., XI. 528.]

Χρήσιμον δὲ παράδειγμα ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου λαβεῖν, πρὸς τὸ νοηθῆναι τὴν δι' ἀνθρώπων ἄφεσιν ὑπὸ Θεοῦ γενομένην ἀνθρώποις ἀμαρτημάτων. Οἱ κατὰ νόμον ἱερεῖς κωλύονται περὶ τινων προσφέρειν ἀμαρτημάτων θυσίαν, ἵνα ἀφεθῇ τοῖς περὶ ὧν αἱ θυσίαι, τὰ πλημμελήματα. Καὶ οὐδέπου τὴν περὶ τινων ἐξουσίαν ὁ ἱερεὺς ἀκουσίων ἢ πλημμελημάτων ἀναφορὰν ἔχων, ἥδη καὶ περὶ μοιχείας, ἢ ἐκουσίου φόνου, ἢ τινος ἄλλου χαλεπωτέρου πταίσματος προσφέρει ὀλοκαύτωμα, ἢ περὶ ἀμαρτίας.

[Apostles and priests know by the Spirit for what sins to sacrifice, and for what sins not.]

28.

[Migne, P. G., XI. 529.]

Οὕτω τοιγαροῦν καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ τοῖς ἀποστόλοις ὁμοιωμένοι ἱερεῖς ὄντες κατὰ τὸν μέγαν ἀρχιερέα, ἐπιστήμην λαβόντες τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ θεραπείας, ἴσασιν, ὑπὸ τοῦ Πνεύματος διδασκόμενοι, περὶ ὧν χρὴ ἀναφέρειν θυσίας ἀμαρτημάτων, καὶ πότε καὶ τίνα τρόπον καὶ γινώσκουσι περὶ ὧν οὐ χρὴ τοῦτο ποιεῖν.

[Some arrogate the power of remitting mortal sins, as idolatry, adultery, and fornication, but for these we are not to pray.]

28.

[Migne, P. G., XI. 529.]

Οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως ἑαυτοῖς τινες ἐπιτρέψαντες τὰ ὑπὲρ τὴν ἱερατικὴν ἀξίαν, τάχα μὴδὲ ἀκριβοῦντες τὴν ἱερατικὴν ἐπιστήμην, αὐχοῦσιν ὡς δυνάμενοι καὶ εἰδωλολατρείας συγχωρεῖν, μοιχείας τε καὶ πορνείας ἀφίεναι, ὡς διὰ τῆς εὐχῆς αὐτῶν περὶ τῶν ταῦτα τετολμηκότων λυομένης καὶ τῆς πρὸς θάνατον ἀμαρτίας. Οὐ γὰρ ἀναγινώσκουσι τό· Ἔστιν ἀμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον, οὐ περὶ ἐκείνης λέγω ἵνα τις ἐρωτήσῃ.

[The Unpardonable Sin.]

Commentaria in Joannem.

Tom. ii. 6.

[Migne, P. G., XIV. 129.]

ἐν δὲ τῷ Εὐαγγελίῳ ἄφεσιν μὲν ἐπαγγελλομένου ἐπὶ τῆς εἰς αὐτὸν ἀμαρτίας, ἀποφαينوμένου δὲ περὶ τῆς εἰς τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα βλασφημίας, ὡς οὐ μόνον ἐν τούτῳ τῷ αἰῶνι μὴ ἐσομένης τῆς ἀφέσεως τῷ εἰς αὐτὸ δυσφημήσαντι, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι. Καὶ μήποτε οὐ πάντως διὰ τὸ τιμιώτερον εἶναι το Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, οὐ γίνεται ἄφεσις τῷ εἰς αὐτὸ ἡμαρτηκῷ,

**Origen.**

ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ Χριστοῦ μὲν πάντα μετέχειν τὰ λογικὰ οἷς δίδεται συγγνώμη μεταβαλλομένοις ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων, τοῦ δὲ ἁγίου Πνεύματος τοὺς κατηξιωμένους, μηδεμιᾶς εὐλογον εἶναι συγγνώμης τυχεῖν μετὰ τηλικαύτης καὶ τοιαύτης συμπνοίας τοῖς εἰς τὸ κακὸν ἔτι ἀποπίπτουσι καὶ ἐκτρεπομένοις τὰς τοῦ ἐνυπάρχοντος Πνεύματος συμβουλίας.

[*Remission of sins by Baptism (and Martyrdom).*]

*Exhortatio ad Martyrium.*

30.

[Migne, P. G., XI. 600.]

Ὑπομνησθῶμεν δὲ καὶ ὧν ἡμαρτήκαμεν· καὶ ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτημάτων χωρὶς βαπτίσματος λαβεῖν· καὶ ὅτι οὐκ ἔστι δυνατόν κατὰ τοὺς εὐαγγελικοὺς νόμους αὐθις βαπτίσασθαι ὕδατι καὶ Πνεύματι εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτημάτων· καὶ ὅτι βάπτισμα ἡμῖν δίδεται τὸ τοῦ μαρτυρίου· οὕτω γὰρ ὠνόμασται, ὡς δῆλον ἐκ τοῦ ἐπιφέρεισθαι μὲν τῷ Δύνασθε πιεῖν τὸ ποτήριον ὃ ἐγὼ πίνω; τό· Ἡ τὸ βάπτισμα, ὃ ἐγὼ βαπτίζομαι, βαπτισθῆναι. Ἀλλαχοῦ δὲ εἴρηται Βάπτισμα δὲ ἔχω βαπτισθῆναι· καὶ τί συνέχομαι ἕως ὅτου τελεσθῇ; Καὶ ἐπίστησον, εἰ τὸ κατὰ τὸ μαρτυρίον βάπτισμα, ὥσπερ τὸ τοῦ Σωτῆρος καθάρσιον γέγονε τοῦ κόσμου, καὶ αὐτὸ ἐπὶ πολλῶν θεραπείᾳ καθαιρόμενον γίνεται. Ὡς γὰρ οἱ τῷ κατὰ τὸν Μωσέως νόμον θυσιαστηρίῳ προσεδρεύοντες διακονεῖν ἐδόκουν δι' αἵματος ταύρων καὶ τράγων ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτημάτων ἐκείνοις, οὕτως αἱ ψυχαὶ τῶν πεπελεκισμένων ἔνεκεν τῆς μαρτυρίας Ἰησοῦ, μὴ μάτην τῷ ἐν οὐρανοῖς θυσιαστηρίῳ παρεδρεύουσαι διακονοῦσι τοῖς εὐχομένοις ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτημάτων.

[*Seven means of remission of sins in the Gospels. The seventh is Penance, in which the sinner confesses to the priest of the Lord. In Penance, Unction included.*]

*In Leviticum.*

*Hom. 2.*

[Migne, P. G., XII. 417.]

Et tamen ne tibi hæc non tam erigant animos pro virtute, quam pro desperatione dejiciant, audisti quanta sint in lege sacrificia pro peccatis, audi nunc quantæ sint remissiones peccatorum in Evangeliis. Est ista prima, qua baptizamur in remissionem peccatorum. Secunda remissio est in passione martyrii. Tertia est, quæ pro eleemosyna datur. Dicit enim Salvator: *Verumtamen date eleemosynam, et ecce omnia munda sunt vobis.* Quarta nobis fit remissio peccatorum, per hoc quod et nos remittimus peccata fratribus nostris. Sic enim dicit ipse Dominus et Salvator noster, quia *si remiseritis fratribus vestris ex corde peccata ipsorum, et vobis remittet Pater vester peccata vestra. Quod si non remiseritis fratribus vestris ex corde, nec vobis remittet Pater vester, et sicut in oratione nos dicere docuit: Remitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos remittimus debitoribus nostris.* Quinta peccatorum remissio est, cum converterit quis peccatorem ab errore viæ suæ.



**Origen.**

Ita enim dicit Scriptura divina, quia *qui converti fecerit peccatorem ab errore viæ suæ, salvat animam ejus a morte, et cooperit multitudinem peccatorum.* Sexta quoque fit remissio per abundantiam charitatis, sicut et ipse Dominus dicit : *Amen dico tibi, remittuntur ei peccata multa, quoniam dilexit multum.* Et apostolus dicit : *Quoniam charitas cooperit multitudinem peccatorum.* Est adhuc et septima, licet dura et laboriosa, per pœnitentiam remissio peccatorum, cum lavat peccator in lacrymis stratum suum, et fiunt ei lacrymæ suæ panes die ac nocte, et cum non erubescit sacerdoti Domini indicare peccatum suum, et quærere medicinam, secundum eum qui ait : *Dixi, Pronuntiato adversum me injustitiam meam Domino et tu remisisti impietatem cordis mei.* In quo impletur et illud, quod Jacobus apostolus dicit : *Si quis autem infirmatur, vocet presbyteros Ecclesiæ, et imponent ei manus, ungentes eum oleo in nomine Domini, et oratio fidei salvabit infirmum, et si in peccatis fuerit, remittentur ei.*

[*The mortifications of penance an acceptable sacrifice as of wheat-flour.*]

Hom. 2.

[Migne, P. G., XII. 419.]

Si autem in amaritudine fletus tui fueris luctu, lacrymis et lamentatione confectus, si carnem tuam maceraveris, et jejuniis ac multa abstinencia aridam feceris, et dixeris, quia sicut frictorium confrixæ sunt ossa mea tunc sacrificium similitudinem a sartagine, vel a craticula obtulisse te noveris : et hoc modo inveniris tu verius et perfectius secundum Evangelium offerre sacrificia, quæ secundum legem jam offerre non potest Israel.

[*Sins vary as wood, hay, stubble, which are less or more readily overcome by fire, i. e. penance.*]

Hom. 14.

[Migne, P. G., XII. 555.]

Possumus adhuc addere etiam illud, quod natura peccati similis est materiæ quæ igni consumitur, quam ædificari Paulus apostolus a peccatoribus dicit, qui supra fundamentum Christi ædificant ligna, fenum, stipulam. In quo manifeste ostenditur esse quædam peccata ita levia, ut stipulæ compareantur, cui utique ignis illatus diu non potest immorari. Alia vero feno esse similia, quæ ipsa non difficulter ignis absumat, verum aliquanto tardius quam in stipulis immoretur. Alia vero esse quæ lignis conferantur, in quibus pro qualitate criminum diuturnum et grande pabulum ignis inveniat. Ita ergo unumquodque peccatum pro qualitate vel quantitate sui, pœnarum justa persolvit. Verumtamen quid opus est fidelibus, et his qui cognoverunt Deum, de pœnarum qualitatibus cogitare? Quid opus est ligna, quid fenum, quid vel ipsam stipulam fundamento Christi superponere.

**Origen.**

[*The action of the bishop in expelling or retaining does not always correspond with the hidden realities.*]

*Hom. 14.*

[Migne, *P. G.*, XII. 556.]

Exiit enim a veritate, exiit a timore Dei, a fide, a charitate, sicut superius diximus, quomodo per hæc quis exeat de castris ecclesiæ, etiamsi per episcopi vocem minime abjiciatur. Sicut e contrario interdum fit, ut aliquis non recto iudicio eorum qui præsumunt ecclesiæ depellatur, et foras mittatur. Sed ipse non ante exiit, hoc est, si non ita egit ut mereretur exire, nihil læditur in eo, quod non recto iudicio ab hominibus videtur expulsus. Et ita fit ut interdum ille qui foras mittitur, intus sit: et ille foris, qui intus retineri videtur.

[*If any have committed a culpam mortalem, which is not a crimen mortale, or blasphemy of the faith, this can be repaired through penance. For grave crimina only one penance conceded. For common sins frequently committed, men repeatedly accept penitence, and are repeatedly restored.*]

*Hom. 15.*

[Migne, *P. G.*, XII. 560.]

Istas ergo domos, si forte alicui, sicut supra exposuimus, lapsus acciderit, semper est recuperandi facultas, ut verbi gratia dicamus, si nos aliqua culpa mortalis invenerit, quæ non in crimine mortali, non in blasphemia fidei, quæ muro ecclesiastici et apostolici dogmatis cincta est, sed vel in sermonis, vel in morum vitio consistat: hoc est vendidisse domum, quæ in agro est, vel in vico cui murus non est. Hæc ergo venditio et hujusmodi culpa semper reparari potest, nec aliquando tibi interdicitur de commissis hujusmodi pœnitudinem agere. In gravioribus enim criminibus semel tantum pœnitentiæ conceditur locus; ista vero communia, quæ frequenter incurrimus, semper pœnitentiam recipiunt, et sine intermissione redimuntur.

[*St. Paul, who cut off the incestuous Corinthian in 1 Cor., restored him in 2 Cor.*]

*Homiliæ in Psalmos.*

*Hom. i. in Psalm. xxxvii.*

[Migne, *P. G.*, XII. 1370.]

Ita enim dicit Scriptura: *Noli arguere malos ne oderint te, argue sapientem et amabit te.* Vides quomodo sapientem appellat Scriptura eum qui correptioni obnoxius est, non tamen odit, sed magis diligit arguentem. Tales erant illi qui ab Apostolo arguebantur, et confutati non oderant arguentes. Unde et ego arbitror illum qui in Corintho gravissime deliquerat, idcirco misericordiam consecutum, quoniam correptus ab Apostolo, et ita acerbè correptus, ut a conventu abscinderetur Ecclesiæ, non tamen odio habuit arguentem, sed animadversionem patienter



**Origen.**

accepit et fortiter tulit. Ego arbitror quod etiam majorem affectum concepit erga Paulum, atque erga omnes qui statutis Pauli in ejus animadversione paruerant. Unde et Paulus sententiam revocat, et ejectum reconjungit Ecclesiæ, et addit dicens : *Confirmate in eum charitatem.*

[*We are reproved by bishops, and others, as by the Angel of Penitence in the Shepherd, if that book is to be received.*]

*Hom. i. in Psalm. xxxvii.*

[Migne, P. G., XII. 1372.]

Omnes episcopi atque omnes presbyteri vel diaconi erudiunt nos, et erudientes adhibent correptiones, et verbis austerioribus increpant. Est autem quando erudimur etiam a procuratoribus, et actoribus, id est ab his angelis quibus creditæ sunt dispensandæ et regendæ animæ nostræ : quemadmodum describitur in quodam loco angelus pœnitentiæ, qui nos suscipit castigandos, sicut *Pastor* exponit, si cui tamen libellus ille recipiendus videtur.

[*Choose a suitable physician to whom to confess sin : and follow his advice as to whether your sins should be exposed in the assembly of the Church.*]

*Hom. ii. in Psalm. xxxvii.*

[Migne, P. G., XII. 1386.]

Tantummodo circumspice diligentius, cui debeas confiteri peccatum tuum. Proba prius medicum, cui debeas causam languoris exponere, qui sciat infirmari cum infirmante, flere cum flente, qui condolendi et compatiendi noverit disciplinam ; ut ita demum, si quid ille dixerit, qui se prius et eruditum medicum ostenderit et misericordem, si quid consilii dederit, facias, et sequaris, si intellexerit et præviderit, talem esse languorem tuum, qui in conventu totius ecclesiæ exponi debeat et curari, ex quo fortassis et ceteri ædificari poterunt et tu ipse facile sanari. Multa hoc deliberatione et satis perito medici illius consilio procurandum est.

[*If bishops have S. Peter's qualifications, they may remit and retain sins ; otherwise not. If themselves bound by sin, they can have no such power.*]

*In Matthæum (xvi. 18).*

*Tom. xii. 14.*

[Migne, P.G., XIII. 1013.]

Ἐπεὶ δὲ οἱ τὸν τόπον τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς ἐκδικοῦντες χρῶνται τῷ ῥητῷ, ὡς Πέτρος, καὶ τὰς κλεῖδας τῆς τῶν οὐρανῶν βασιλείας ἀπὸ τοῦ Σωτῆρος εἰληφότες διδάσκουσιν τε τὰ ὑπ' αὐτῶν δεδεμένα, τουτέστι καταδεδικασμένα, καὶ ἐν οὐρανοῖς δεδέσθαι, καὶ τὰ ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἄφεσιν εἰληφότα καὶ ἐν οὐρανοῖς λελύσθαι λεκτέον ὅτι ὑγιῶς λέγουσιν, εἰ ἔχουσιν ἔργον δι' ὃ εἴρηται ἐκείνῳ τῷ Πέτρῳ· Σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ εἰ τηλικούτοί εἰσιν, ὡς ἐπ' αὐτοῖς ὑπὸ Χριστοῦ οἰκοδομεῖσθαι τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ ἐπ' αὐτοὺς εὐλόγως τοῦτο ἀναφέροιτ' ἄν. πύλαι δὲ ἄδου οὐκ ὀφείλουσι κατισχύειν τοῦ θέλοντος δεσμεῖν καὶ λύειν.

**Origen.**

Εἰ δε σείραῖς τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων αὐτοῦ ἔσφιγκται μάτην καὶ δεσμεῖ καὶ λυεῖ καὶ τάχα δύνασαι εἰπεῖν, ἐν τοῖς ἐν τῷ σοφῷ οὐρανοῖς, ταῖς ἀρεταῖς, δέδεται ὁ φαῦλος, καὶ πάλιν δὲ λέλυται ἐν αὐταῖς ὁ σπουδαῖος, καὶ ἀμνηστίαν λαβὼν τῶν πρὸ τῆς ἀρετῆς αὐτῷ ἡμαρτημένων· ὥσπερ δὲ τὸν μὴ ἔχοντα σειρὰς ἁμαρτιῶν, μηδὲ ἁμαρτίας παραβαλλομένας σχοινίῳ μακρῷ ἢ ζυγοῦ ἱμάντι δαμάλεως, οὐδὲ ὁ Θεὸς ἂν δῆσαιτο· οὕτως οὐδ' ὅστις ἂν ἢ Πέτρος. Εἰ δέ τις μὴ ὢν Πέτρος, καὶ μὴ ἔχων τὰ εἰρημένα ἐνταῦθα, ὥσπερ Πέτρος οἴεται δῆσειν ἐπὶ γῆς, ὡς τὰ δεδεμένα δεδέσθαι ἐν οὐρανοῖς, καὶ λύσειν ἐπὶ γῆς, ὡς τὰ λελυμένα λελύσθαι ἐν οὐρανοῖς, οὗτος τετύφωται μὴ ἐπιστάμενος τὸ βούλημα τῶν γραφῶν, καὶ τυφθεὶς ἐμπέπτωκεν εἰς τὸ τοῦ διαβόλου πτώμα.

[Contrasted examples of the graver and the lighter sins.]

Tom. xiii.

[Migne, P. G., XIII. 1173.]

Ὡσπερ οὖν φαντασίᾳ τοῦ εἰς ὑπερβολὴν Χριστοῦ ἐπιτριβῆς ἀφορμὰς παρεῖχεν ὁ ἐπὶ παντὸς ἁμαρτήματος λέγων τὰ τοιαῦτα εἰρῆσθαι, καὶ φόνος ἢ τὸ ἁμάρτημα, ἢ φαρμακία, ἢ παιδοφθορία ἢ τι τῶν τηλικούτων· οὕτως ἐκ τοῦ ἐναντίου ὁ τὸν ἀδελφὸν διαστειλάμενος ἀπὸ τοῦ ὀνομαζομένου ἀδελφοῦ, διδάξαι ἂν ἐπὶ ἐλάττωσι τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἁμαρτημάτων μὴ ἐπιστρέψαντα μετὰ τὸν ἔλεγχον, ὡς ἐθνικὸν καὶ τελώνην λογισθῆναι ἐπὶ ἁμαρτήμασι τοῖς μὴ πρὸς θάνατον, ἢ ὡς ὠνόμασεν ἐν Ἀριθμοῖς ὁ νόμος, τοῖς μὴ θανατηφόροις· ὅπερ δόξαι ἂν ὡμότερον τυγχάνειν οὐ γὰρ οἶμαι ταχέως εὐρεθήσεσθαι τινα τὸν μὴ τρὶς ἐπὶ τῷ αὐτῷ εἶδει τῆς ἁμαρτίας ἐλεγχθέντα, φέρ' εἰπεῖν, λοιδορία, καθ' ἣν οἱ λοιδοροῦντες δυσφημοῦσι τοὺς πέλας, οἳ τε θυμούμενοι, ἢ πολυποσία, ἢ λόγῳ ψευδεῖ καὶ ἀργῷ, ἢ τινι τῶν ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς.

[Penitents foul beard and hair in the dust, and roll in sackcloth.]

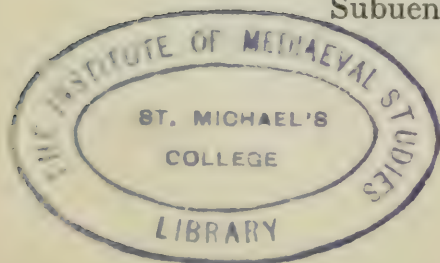
**Commodianus.**

[Corpus Scriptorum Ecc. Lat. XV. Vindobonæ, 69.]

*Instructiones*, II. 8.

*Pœnitentibus.*

Pœnitens es factus : noctibus diebusque precare  
Attamen a matre noli discedere longe,  
Et tibi misericors poterit Altissimus esse,  
Non fiet in uacuum confusio culpæ proinde,  
In reatu tuo sorde manifesta deflere,  
Tu si uulnus habes altum, medicumque require,  
Et tamen in pœnis poteris tua damna lenire.  
Namque fatebor enim unum me ex uobis adesse  
Terroremque item quondam sensisse ruinæ.  
Idcirco commoneo uulneratos cautius ire,  
Barbam (atque) comam fœdare in puluere terræ  
Volutarique saccis et petere summo de Rege,  
Subuenire tibi, ne pereas forte de plebe.





## FROM A.D. 150 TO A.D. 250

IF the period following the sub-Apostolic may be taken as commencing from A.D. 150, the first notice of the new period may be given to Marcus the Gnostic, of whom something is known from the writings of S. Irenæus. Marcus appears to have been living when S. Irenæus wrote (c. A.D. 182). The followers of Marcus were at that time troublesome in the Rhone district. The incident of the corruption by Marcus of a deacon's wife occurred in his earlier years in Asia Minor, and it may be inferred that it was in Asia Minor that the heretical teacher then had his residence. The date may be taken approximately as A.D. 150.

Marcus the  
Gnostic.

The narrative of Irenæus is as follows :—

“ And that this Marcus employed philters and irritants with, some if not all of the women, in order that he might insult their bodies: these women made confession (ἐξωμολογήσαντο) when on several occasions they returned to the Church of God. Also that they had been ruined in body by him, and that they had loved him altogether in an erotic way. And so a certain deacon of our people in Asia having admitted him into his house, had fallen into this misfortune. For his wife, who was a beautiful woman, had been corrupted alike in doctrine and in body by this charlatan, and had for a long time followed him. Later with much effort the brethren had brought her back, and she continued always making *exomologesis*, mourning and weeping over the defilement which she had suffered from the impostor.”<sup>1</sup>

Exomolo-  
gesis of  
women (a) in  
Asia Minor,

From this narrative it appears in the first place that women on several occasions when they returned to the Church made *exomologesis* that they had suffered defilement from Marcus. Here the expression *made exomologesis* must primarily mean *made confession*. The actual confession or verbal acknowledgment of the particular offence may not have been made in public. Later experience would rather indicate that it was not so made. But the public exhibition of penitence, the circumstance of *penance*, which will be usually included in the significance of *exomologesis*, would certainly find place, as it is here shown to have done in the case of the deacon's wife.

The deacon's wife on her return to the Church “ continued making *exomologesis* all the time ” (τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον ἐξομολογού-

<sup>1</sup> *Contra hæreses*, I. xiii.

μένη διατέλεσε). In the exercise of this *exomologesis* she mourned and wept over the corruption which she had suffered. It was a public penitence. It may also be supposed that it was in her case a long-continued penance. Nothing is said of absolution.

(b) in the  
Rhône dis-  
tricts.

In a passage a little farther on Irenæus speaks of similar disorders in his own part of the world, the districts of the Rhône; and also of the penitential practice in those districts.

“Saying and doing such things they also in our districts of the Rhône country have deceived many women who were cauterised in conscience. Of these some make *exomologesis* openly, but others in a tacit sort of way have despaired of the life of God. Of these some have apostatised altogether; and some waver, exemplifying the proverb ‘neither out nor in.’ Such is the fruit they have from the seed of the children of *knowledge*.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus in the churches of the district of which Lyons was the centre a woman who had fallen into mortal sin would, if she bravely repented, make her *exomologesis* “into the open” (εἰς φανερόν). That such *exomologesis* would be the open penitence of a person whose course of life was fairly known to the members of the Church is sufficiently clear: but here again whether the verbal particularisation of the offence was made in the public congregation cannot be decided with certainty.

The  
Martyrs of  
Lyons (A.D.  
177).

(1) Privi-  
lege of  
martyrs.

(2) Apos-  
tates con-  
fess on a  
second  
occasion,  
and are  
recognised  
as martyrs.

Next may be noticed a passage with regard to the martyrs of Lyons in A.D. 177. It occurs in the circular letter from the churches of Lyons and Vienne, which is preserved in Eusebius. This interesting document shows (1) an early instance of exercise by martyrs of an admitted privilege of indulgence, such indulgence regaining for apostates a place in the Church, whether that of the fully reconciled, or, it may be, merely the status of the penitent: and (2) shows also some of the apostates, who had thus found recognition, proving steadfast when a fresh opportunity occurred of confessing the faith in the face of persecution, and so of passing to the martyrs’ crown.

The passage is as follows:—

“For through the living the dead were made to live, and the martyrs accorded grace to those who had failed to give the martyrs’ witness. And much joy came to the virgin mother, who received back as living those whom she had aborted as dead. For through these the greater number of those who had denied were mothered afresh, and again conceived and kindled to life, and learned to confess (Christ); and being now alive, and braced up, approached the tribunal, for that God Who willeth not the death of a sinner, but accords compassion to penitence, sweetened it to them, that they might be again interrogated by the proconsul. For Cæsar

<sup>1</sup> *Contra hæreses*, I. xiii.



having directed that while such [as were steadfast] should be beaten to death; if any denied, these should be released: when the fair in this place began to assemble (for it is much frequented, persons of all races coming together to it) the proconsul had the blessed ones brought to his judgment seat, making a spectacle of them, and displaying them to the multitudes. He thereupon proceeded to interrogate them afresh. So many as were found to have acquired the citizenship of the Romans he had beheaded: the rest he sent to the wild beasts. Christ was glorified exceedingly in those who had formerly denied, but who now, contrary to the anticipation of the ethnics, made confession. For these were privately questioned as persons about to be released. But when they made confession they were added to the roll of the martyrs.”<sup>1</sup>

The privilege of martyrs to accord reconciliation will become the subject of even fierce dispute after the Decian persecution, and the letters of S. Cyprian will throw much light on the extent to which the privilege had then advanced.

The present passage should be carefully noted in view of these later developments. It may perhaps be contended that nothing more is here described than the inspiriting influence of a great example, which enabled the fallen to regain their strength, and to confess their Lord when the opportunity recurred. But the passage appears to indicate quite clearly that the Church received back her once unfaithful children as living members *before* they confessed Christ on the second trial. It is reasonable therefore to understand here an early instance of the exercise of the martyrs' prerogative, of which so much is heard a little later on.

The apostates who in this narrative are shown to have taken their place in the end among the martyrs are regarded by the narrator as having without doubt obtained the martyrs' crown. It will be seen in later studies, that it came to be generally recognised in the Church that an apostate who on a second trial stood fast and accepted martyrdom re-established himself among the faithful by that fact alone without either intervention of martyrs or public reconciliation by the Church.

Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, whose date may be given as A.D. 171, was a notable bishop of his age, who wrote several letters of value to neighbouring churches. In an age when rigorist practice was much in vogue, he was noteworthy as favouring a more indulgent discipline. The following passage from Eusebius shows Dionysius as ready to reconcile grave offenders generally. It would appear that Pinytus, the bishop of Cnossus in Crete, to whom Dionysius wrote the letter to which reference is made, was on the other hand a rigorist disciplinarian representing the sterner school.

Dionysius  
of Corinth.

His ten-  
dency to  
lenience.

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, V. i.

... And he gives them many exhortations concerning marriage and purity. Also he directs that those returning from whatsoever defection, whether grave sin of conduct, or heretical error, should be received. With these (epistles) is bound up another epistle 'to the Cnossians' in which he exhorts Pinytus the bishop of the diocese not to impose upon the brethren in the matter of purity a heavy burden of rigorous obligation, but to direct his provisions to the weakness of the many. To which letter Pinytus, making reply, expresses admiration and appreciation of Dionysius; but in return calls upon him at some time to impart a stronger diet, and again to nourish the people under his care by a letter breathing a fuller perfection. Else by continually dwelling upon words of a milk diet they might grow old unawares in the discipline of infancy."<sup>1</sup>

What may be understood as to the exact attitude of these two bishops, Dionysius and Pinytus? It is not to be supposed that Pinytus was hostile to Christian marriage. Eusebius finds occasion from his letter to speak of him in terms of high commendation both as regards the orthodoxy of his faith, and the care with which he tended his flock. Nor is it to be supposed that Dionysius was prepared to regard sexual immorality as not having the character of grave sin. The necessity for every good Christian to avoid such sin has always been a first principle of Christian morals. When then Dionysius exhorts Pinytus not to impose upon the brethren in the matter of purity a heavy burden of rigorous obligation (μη βαρὺ φορτίον ἐπάναγκες τὸ περὶ ἀγνείας τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐπιτιθέναι), what is to be understood?

The prevalence of rigorism.

At this time, at least in the churches of the West, a rigorist attitude towards capital offenders was much in favour. Tertullian's Montanist treatise *De Pudicitia* (c. A.D. 220) will show the Roman church at a date fifty years later than Dionysius and Pinytus as barring reconciliation in this life to offenders in the matter of purity. A similar attitude in the African churches is clearly to be inferred. Tertullian directs his treatise against the action of the contemporary bishop of Rome, apparently Callistus, who had decided that in future reconciliation should be open to offenders of this class. The strong antagonism of Tertullian to the action of Callistus will afford much insight into the Western usage, and to the cleavage of opinion in the Christian society. Returning to the church of Corinth in A.D. 171, it may be presumed as regards Dionysius and Pinytus, that Pinytus was disposed to side with the rigorists, while Dionysius adopted the same lenient view as fifty years later commended itself to Callistus.

Montanism.

Some reference may be made to Montanism, and to the influence which it exercised upon the Catholic Church as regards the maintenance of a rigorous discipline. Montanus, a Phrygian, with

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, IV. xxiii.



his female disciples Prisca and Maximilla, became conspicuous as the subjects of what seemed to be supernatural manifestations. It has been said of these manifestations that they were not unlike the Irvingite experiences of the nineteenth century. The Christian community generally mistrusted these "ecstasies," and inclined to refer them to evil influences. About A.D. 172 Montanus was condemned by the church authorities in Asia; a condemnation which in time found approval in the Catholic Church generally. The adhesion of Tertullian to the Montanist separation was perhaps the most important incident in its history: and Tertullian's writings have supplied after ages with a measure of knowledge regarding the Montanists which would not otherwise have been available.

Montanism was not, at least in its beginnings, connected with any grave error of doctrinal statement. But from the first it appears to have adopted a rigorous attitude in matters of discipline. Second marriages found no recognition: and it will appear from Tertullian that the three capital offences of apostasy, impurity, and bloodshed were regarded as irremissible on earth. In this rigid attitude towards capital offenders the Montanists claimed to stand upon the ancient paths, and to maintain what had always been the true sentiment of the Catholic Church. In support of this position the Montanists no doubt found much sympathetic opinion within the Church itself: and it may be expected that the maintenance by the Montanists, when in separation, of a high Puritan claim would have a reflected influence upon the Church. Tendencies to unaccustomed laxity would find a check from the unyielding attitude of the critics who stood without. In this respect the influence exercised by Montanism would be very similar to the influence which for a long period following the Decian persecution was exercised by Novatianism.

Clement of Alexandria, born about A.D. 150, was the successor of Pantænus as head of the catechetical school of Alexandria. The period during which he occupied this position was from A.D. 190 to A.D. 203, and his literary output may be for the most part assigned to the same period. He was a presbyter. Whether he was or was not a native of Alexandria, the years of his training and maturity were passed in that city, and his writings may fairly be taken as representative of the Alexandrian church.

The following passage from the *Stromateis* (*Miscellanies*) is of great interest.

"It behoves him who has received the remission of sins that he sin no more. For, as regards the first and only penitence (*μετανοία*) of sins, that is to say, the sins which formerly found place in the course of the ethnic and earlier life, I mean the life in ignorance, penitence is forthwith incumbent upon those who are called, cleansing the region of the soul from offences, in order that faith may be established. And the

In discipline  
rigorist.

Clement of  
Alexandria.

The *Stro-  
mateis*.

Normally  
only the  
penitence  
before  
Baptism.

Lord, who knoweth hearts and foreknoweth things to come, the fickleness of man, and the perversity and subtilty of the devil, foresaw of old time from on high, that he being envious of man on account of the remission of his sins, would inflict certain occasions of sin upon the servants of God, astutely plotting evil in order that these might share his fall with him. (The Lord) accordingly being exceedingly merciful, gave another and a second penitence (μετάνοιαν) to those among the faithful, who fell into some transgression. If any be tempted after his call, and be overborne by compulsion or persuasion he may yet receive this one penitence not to be repented of. 'For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.' But continual and successive repentances (μετάνοιαι) differ nothing from the case of those who have not believed, unless it be in this only, that they are conscious that they sin. And I do not know which of these is worse, that a man commit sin knowingly, or that, having repented of those things wherein he has sinned, he transgress again. For on being brought to the test, sin appears on either hand, whether the sin which upon commission is condemned by him who commits it, or the sin of him who knows beforehand regarding that which is about to be done, that he is laying his hand to an evil thing. On the one hand a man gratifies himself in anger or lust, not being ignorant of the kind of gratifications he accepts : on the other a man, after repenting of his gratifications rushes again into lust, and so makes himself like the first, who sinned wilfully at the start. For he who does again that for which he has done penance, thereby condemning what he does, does in fact perform his sin wilfully.

"He then who from among the ethnics and from that old life has betaken himself to faith, has obtained the forgiveness of sins once. But he, who has sinned after this, and then repents, even though he obtain pardon ought to fear, as one no longer washed to the forgiveness of sins. For it is essential that he renounce not only the idols which he formerly held as gods, but also the works of the former life, for that he has been 'born again not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh,' but in the Spirit. And this would mean repenting by not giving way to the same offence. For frequent penitence, and the readiness to change easily through want of self-discipline, is but the practice of sins turned about. There is the semblance of repentance, but it is not repentance—this often asking pardon for what we often do amiss."<sup>1</sup>

One penitence after baptism conceded.

In this passage the student is at once struck by the reproduction of the teaching of the *Shepherd* of Hermas. The normal experience of the convert is the one penitence (μετάνοια) preceding Baptism.

<sup>1</sup> *Stromateis*, II. 13.



There should be no other. But GOD, Who knows our hearts and the wiles of the devil, has conceded a second *μετάνοια* for those who have sinned after Baptism. This, however, can be admitted only once.

The *Shepherd* of Hermas, published in Rome perhaps in A.D. 100, and certainly in the earlier half of the second century, is thus seen serving as a basis for teaching in Alexandria at the beginning of the third century. Clement in fact refers in his writings directly to the *Shepherd* on several occasions, and treats it as a book of high credit.<sup>1</sup> So, too, after him does Origen, his successor in the catechetical school of Alexandria.<sup>2</sup>

Relation to  
*Shepherd* of  
Hermas.

Thus in Alexandria at the beginning of the third century, the considered teaching of the head of the catechetical school is that, normally there should be no other *μετάνοια* for the Christian than that before Baptism, but that the Divine mercy has provided another opportunity of forgiveness for those who after Baptism have unhappily fallen into grave sin. It will be noted that the rule given by Hermas that this penitence might only be accorded once appears now to be stated as an accepted rule of Church practice. Hermas had indicated that the one penitence was to be admitted at a particular time under the stress of a special emergency. That emergency had been the imminence of a grave persecution, somewhat confused by Hermas with the expected approach of the end of all things. The concession of penitence then made was to have no future application. When Clement of Alexandria writes a century has passed. Persecutions have come and gone. The end of the world is not yet. The concession of one penitence after Baptism is, however, retained, as Hermas had himself retained it in his later *Similitude IX*. And this rule of one Penance after Baptism becomes the rule of the Christian Church, and in the West continues in force for centuries.

With Hermas, the one Penance conceded had found its main justification in the imminence of persecution, and of the end of the world. To him this one admitted Penance appeared as a large concession. It was part of its justification that it was not for a moment to be regarded as open to repetition. Clement, teaching in Alexandria about A.D. 200, feels called upon to give a reasoned justification for existing practice. He regards the one conceded Penance as intended for the case of those who have been overborne by force or guile against their real intentions. Citing the passage

<sup>1</sup> E. g. *Strom.*, I. 17 (*P. G.*, VIII. 800). Λέγει δὲ καὶ ὁ Ποιμὴν ὁ ἄγγελος τῆς μετανόιας τῷ Ἑρμῇ περὶ τοῦ ψευδοπροφήτου.

*Strom.*, II. 1 (*P. G.*, VIII. 933). Φησὶ γὰρ ἐν τῷ ὁράματι τῷ Ἑρμῇ ἡ δύναμις ἡ φανείσα.

*Strom.*, I. 29 (*P. G.*, VIII. 928). Θεῶς τοίνυν ἡ δύναμις ἡ τῷ Ἑρμῇ κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν λαλοῦσα

<sup>2</sup> *Com. in Epist. ad Rom.*, X. 31 (*P. G.*, XIV. 1282). Puto tamen quod Hermas iste sit scriptor libelli illius, qui *Pastor* appellatur, quæ scriptura valde mihi utilis videtur, et ut puto divinitus inspirata.

Such penitence not available for wilful sin whether of first intention or of repeated act.

Yet penitence open to an adulteress.

in the Epistle to the Hebrews which states that there is no more a sacrifice for sins "if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth," Clement argues that there is nothing to choose in wilfulness between the man who sins with his eyes open, and the man who, having repented of a sin, permits himself to fall into it again. Accordingly a repetition of Penance is not admitted.

In an often-cited passage on the case of an unfaithful wife Clement again follows the lead of Hermas.

"But she who repented (*μετανοήσασα*) as born again in the conversion of her conduct hath regeneration of life: for the old harlot being dead, she passes again into life, being born afresh in her penance."<sup>1</sup>

Clement on the whole takes up a rigorist position.

Tertullian will shortly be found inveighing against the *Shepherd* of Hermas as a "shepherd of adulterers," because he countenanced the admission of adulterous persons to penitence. It is interesting to see that a quarter of a century before Tertullian's treatise Clement of Alexandria stands by Hermas as regards the penitent adulteress. Origen, Clement's successor, is at one with Tertullian in regarding adultery as outside the scope of ministerial reconciliation. Setting aside the case of the adulteress, Clement may be said to take up a rigorist position. He holds that the normal situation is to admit only the penance preceding Baptism, but that after Baptism Penance may be admitted on a single occasion for sins not having the character of definite wilfulness. Sins of definite wilfulness are outside the scope of this one Penance.

The penance of Natalius.

Next may be noticed the remarkable story of the penance of Natalius. Eusebius preserves it in an extract from an anonymous writer. Natalius was a Roman confessor at about the beginning of the third century, and it is said of him that at some time after his faithful witness he was persuaded to undertake the office of bishop in the heretical sect of which Theodotus the banker was a moving spirit;<sup>2</sup> and that he was paid for his complacency a regular salary of a hundred and fifty denarii a month. The Lord was unwilling that one of those who had confessed Him under persecution should perish through being out of the Church; and warned him in visions to return. When Natalius disregarded these, angels were sent who scourged him a whole night long.

"In consequence he arose early in the morning, and put on sack-cloth, and sprinkled ashes (on his head), and with much earnestness and many tears prostrated himself before Zephyrinus the bishop, rolling himself under the feet not only of the clergy but also of the laity: and when he had moved with his tears the compassionate Church of the compassionate Lord, using much entreaty, and showing the weals

<sup>1</sup> *Strom.*, II. 23.

<sup>2</sup> The sect appears to have been originated by another Theodotus from Byzantium, Theodotus "the currier" (*τοῦ σκυρέως*).



of the stripes which he had received, he was with difficulty admitted to communion.”<sup>1</sup>

The interest of the passage for the present inquiry lies in this description of the penance and reconciliation of Natalius. A grave offender who seeks reconciliation is here seen to give expression to his desires by (1) the adoption of the outward tokens of penitence, which are sackcloth and ashes; (2) prostrating himself (*προσπεσεῖν*) before the bishop; (3) rolling himself beneath the feet of the faithful, both clergy and laity; (4) the employment of tears and entreaties, accompanied by the exhibition of his stripes. As regards his reconciliation it is stated that it was accorded with difficulty. But what was accorded was *κοινωνηθῆναι*, which is perhaps best understood as direct admission to communion rather than as admission to the status of a penitent.

The public penitence of Natalius in the various features indicated corresponds even remarkably with the public circumstance of penance in the early Christian ages as known from several other instances. But it is noteworthy that Natalius, who rendered this penance, was a bishop, though not a bishop of the Catholic Church. Only a few years later, in the days of Cyprian, it will be a recognised principle that bishops and other clergy do not undergo public penance. If in the case of any of the clergy discipline for grave offence is called for, such clergy are to be degraded from the exercise of office, and replaced among the lay people.

The Roman church at the close of the second century seems to have stood, as has already been noticed, for the sterner discipline. In Tertullian's Montanist treatise *De Pudicitia*, from which much will shortly be learned, he cries out in passionate indignation against the contemporary bishop of Rome who, in the face of all accepted practice, had recently proclaimed the extension of penance with reconciliation to persons who had sinned in the capital sin of impurity. Tertullian does not name this Roman bishop, and his identification has to be sought elsewhere. Hippolytus, in a passage of the *Refutation of all Heresies* which will shortly be noticed, states that Callistus admitted offenders in the matter of purity to reconciliation. Accordingly, it is now generally agreed that the bishop who took the momentous step of which Tertullian writes so freely, was Callistus, who succeeded Zephyrinus as bishop of Rome in A.D. 218. Prior to the action of Callistus it must be understood that the Roman church refused to reconcile offenders in the matter of impurity, as well as the two other classes of capital offenders, that is to say, apostates and homicides.

Hippolytus has always been, and, indeed, continues to be, one of the greatest problems of ecclesiastical history. He was a

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, V. 28.

learned and prolific writer of the Roman Christian community in the closing years of the second century, and in the opening years of the third century. What else he was is still matter of dispute. Whether he was simply "Hippolytus the presbyter," as he is styled in the Damasine epitaph; or a bishop, as in the Eastern tradition; and, if a bishop, whether he was bishop of Portus; or, as Lightfoot maintained, bishop of the gentiles, or floating population of the harbour, at Portus; or, again, as in the view of Von Döllinger, a rival bishop of Rome in antagonism to Callistus, and so the first of anti-popes; these are questions which are still under debate. But, from the passage now to be cited for its bearing upon penitential practice, it will be seen that Hippolytus was at the time identified with a separatist body, which stood outside the church of which Callistus was the head.

"The charlatan (Callistus) having ventured on such opinions, established a school in antagonism to the Church, teaching in this way. He was the first who planned to make concessions to men regarding sensual pleasures, saying that their sins were forgiven to all by himself. For he who is associated with any other (teacher) and is called a Christian, if he commit any sin, they say that the sin is not accounted to him, if he have recourse to the school of Callistus. And many persons smitten in conscience, who had also been rejected by a variety of sects, were gratified by his ruling. Some also had upon condemnation been cast out of the Church by us. Such persons passing over to these (the followers of Callistus) filled his school. He (Callistus) taught that if a bishop sinned in anything, even a sin unto death, he ought not to be deposed. In his time bishops and priests and deacons who had been married a second or even a third time began to be allowed to hold their place among the clergy. Also if any who was already a clerk married, such an one was suffered to remain among the clergy as not having sinned. Of such an one he would remark that the saying of the Apostle had been uttered: *Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?* Also he said that the parable of the tares had been spoken of such a case. Let the tares grow together with the wheat; that is to say, those in the Church who are guilty of sin. Again, he affirmed that the ark of Noah had happened as a type of the Church, in which there were at once dogs and wolves and crows and all creatures clean and unclean. He said that similarly it should be in the Church. And as many passages as he was able to bring together to this end he thus interpreted. His hearers being pleased with these doctrines, continue (in the school) trifling at once with themselves and with many other persons. Crowds of such stream together into the school. Accordingly these (disciples) are numerous, and pride themselves on their numbers, which are yet due to the sufferance of sensual gratifications, which Christ did not suffer. Despising Him, they prohibit no sort



of sin, affirming that he (Callistus) would remit such sin to those of good-will.”<sup>1</sup>

In the earlier part of the chapter Hippolytus has given a prejudiced sketch of the career of Callistus. He states that in the time of the emperor Commodus, Callistus had been the slave of one Carpophorus, a member of the Christian community, who held some office in the imperial palace. Carpophorus entrusted Callistus with a considerable sum of money, with which to do business of a money-changing or banking character in the *piscina publica*. Callistus failed, and fled in fear; but was seized by his master in the harbour of Portus, whence he was about to sail. Callistus was imprisoned. Later he was scourged on another charge, and then sent as a Christian to the mines in Sardinia, when on the intervention of Marcia, the concubine<sup>2</sup> of Commodus, the Christians in Sardinia were set free, Callistus was freed with the rest, though his name had not been included in the list by Victor, the bishop of Rome. He was now on his return to Rome sent away to Antium, where an allowance was made him. After Victor's death (A.D. 202) he was recalled to Rome by Zephyrinus. At Rome he became a highly serviceable helper to Zephyrinus, whose capacity and character are not rated high by Hippolytus. At some time or other Callistus had found place among the clergy, and under Zephyrinus his position seems to have been practically that of an archdeacon of later times, that is to say, a second-in-command to the bishop.

On the death of Zephyrinus Callistus became bishop of Rome. It may well be that Hippolytus, who, as a scholar and writer was not only unsurpassed at Rome, but was doubtless already receiving from the Church at large something of the widespread esteem which his literary labours deservedly achieved, was of opinion that he was obviously marked out for the episcopal chair, and that the appointment of Callistus was a personal injury. However that may be he does not seem to have broken with Callistus immediately after the death of Zephyrinus. At least he seems still to have been in the communion of the Church when Callistus excommunicated Sabellius. But it may be surmised that this unity did not last long. At any rate, when the passage now cited was written Hippolytus was member of an organisation antagonistic to the organisation of which Callistus was a member. He calls the following of Callistus a *school* (σχολή, διδασκαλείον). It was a school “in antagonism to the Church” (κατὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας). Persons “cast out of the Church” by Hippolytus, or by Hippolytus with associates (ἐκ τῶν ἡμῶν), on conviction of grave offence made their way to the “school” of Callistus, and found a ready reconciliation.

<sup>1</sup> *Refutatio omnium hæresium*, ix. 7.

<sup>2</sup> A legal relationship, presumably accounted as marriage by the Christians.

Hippolytus  
probably  
bishop of a  
separatist  
body in  
Rome.

Von Döllinger saw his way to the following reconstruction of the history: and his conclusions appear to be now generally accepted in Germany.<sup>1</sup> At some time after the accession of Callistus a schism occurred in the Roman church, and of the separatist body then formed Hippolytus became the bishop. This separatist community represented on the side of discipline the sterner or rigorist contention. In the year A.D. 235 Pontianus, then bishop of Rome, and Hippolytus, were both banished at the same time to the island of Sardinia. This associated punishment is explained not only by the fact that they were the two leading Christians in Rome, but also by the fact that they were the bishops of two rival bodies. When in exile in Sardinia Pontianus resigned his office as bishop of Rome, and at Rome Anteros was elected to succeed him (A.D. 235). Hippolytus also appears to have withdrawn from his position as leader of the rival organisation. From the accession of Anteros to the beginnings of the Novatianist sect in A.D. 251 the Roman church was free from schism. Hippolytus himself must be understood as being now reconciled to the Catholic body: and when, somewhat later, both he and Pontianus ended their lives in Sardinia, their ashes were brought to Rome and solemnly deposited in the Christian cemeteries; those of Pontianus in the cemetery of Callistus, and those of Hippolytus in the Tiburtine cemetery. The tradition recorded in the Damasine epitaph that Hippolytus had been for a time a Novatianist was not without a basis. It was in terms inaccurate because the career of Hippolytus antedated that of Novatian by several years; but doubtless the Novatianists of the after time would claim Hippolytus as having stood for the same contention as their own, and as having, like themselves, withdrawn outside the laxer church in a separate but purer society.

His charges  
against  
Callistus.

Hippolytus charges Callistus with four several courses of action, each of which was to him a ground of offence:—

1. Callistus reconciled sinners in the matter of impurity.
2. He taught that bishops who sinned, even to mortal offence, were not to be deposed.
3. Bishops, priests and deacons, who had married a second, or even a third time, were permitted to retain office.
4. Clerks were allowed to marry after ordination.

In each case, if the facts were as stated, Callistus was taking a measure of strong initiative, which would necessarily give offence to the more conservative spirits. The relaxation of the rules affecting the marriage of clerks does not concern the history of Penance. But the Roman reconciliation of offenders in the

<sup>1</sup> Bardenhewer, *Patrologie* (Eng. tr.), pp. 208 *sqq.*; Bonwetsch, Art. "Hippolytus" in *Hauck-Herzog*; Ficker, G., *Studien zur Hippolytfrage*, Leipzig, 1893.



matter of impurity constitutes one of the great landmarks of that history. And the discipline of offending bishops must also be considered. Of these two subjects the reconciliation of the impure will be best treated when Tertullian's writings are under consideration. The discipline of offending bishops may find notice here.

At a later date it became the recognised practice of the Church in the case of offending bishops and clergy not to subject them to the ordinary procedure of public penance, but to depose them from their offices, and to place them among the laity. It was held that this deposition from the exercise of a sacred office was imperatively called for, and that it was punishment enough. No doubt such deposition had been the rule from earlier times, and the complaint of Hippolytus shows Callistus dealing with it. It is evident that as a matter of Church order it would need to be decided what sins rightly involved the deposition of a bishop, and what sins did not. Hippolytus charges Callistus with countenancing the retention of a bishop in his office, even if he had committed a sin unto death (*πρὸς θάνατον*). Hippolytus and Callistus did not agree as to what sins had the deadly character, and they would not agree as to what should involve the deposition of a bishop.

The discipline of offending bishops.

Tertullian, "the first of the great Latin Fathers in point of date, their chief in fire and daring, and the first to create a technical Christian Latinity,"<sup>1</sup> is believed to have been born between A.D. 150 and A.D. 160. His birthplace was Carthage; and his parents were heathen. According to Jerome his father was a proconsular centurion. Tertullian would appear to have been trained for public life, whether in administrative office or in the practice of the law. He was converted to Christianity about A.D. 192. A few years later he attached himself to the Montanist schism. Of his writings it may be broadly said that the lesser half represent the days of his Catholicism; and the greater half the days of his Montanism. His death may be placed between A.D. 230 and A.D. 240. A master of invective, a shrewd and capable disputant, a passionate and perfervid partisan, a hard and rasping critic, he is at the same time utterly in earnest, and transparently sincere. But for the history of Penance his value lies, not in the strength of his convictions, or in the vigour with which he expresses them; but in the important witness which he renders to the penitential practice of his day.

Tertullian.

There are two of the treatises of Tertullian which are thus of high importance for the history of Penance. They are the *De Pœnitentia* and the *De Pudicitia*. Of these the *De Pœnitentia* was written while Tertullian was in the Catholic fellowship; while the *De Pudicitia* is a treatise of his Montanist days, and probably one of the latest which he wrote.

<sup>1</sup> Abp. Benson in *Dic. Christ. Biography*, Art. "Tertullian."

The *De Pœnitentia*.

In Baptism all sins are pardoned.

One penitence after Baptism admissible.

The *De Pœnitentia* is a brief treatise in twelve chapters, of which the first six are concerned with the penitence which should find place before Baptism, and the last six with the penitence admissible after Baptism. It is worthy of notice that as regards the penitence before Baptism Tertullian expressly states that all sins, of flesh or of spirit, of will or of deed, may here find pardon.<sup>1</sup> Once the pardon accorded there should be no such iteration of sin as should again call for a like gracious mercy.<sup>2</sup> Yet there is for the offender after Baptism, a second, and this time a last hope, though Tertullian is shy of bringing it to notice, lest he should seem to encourage men to sin.

“I am reluctant to append mention of a second, now, indeed, the last, hope, lest in treating of a succour of penitence yet remaining, I should seem to indicate that there is still space for sinning. Far be it from any that he should so interpret, as if there were for him an opening for sinning, because there is an opening for penitence; and as if the bounty of the heavenly clemency afforded a licence for human daring.”<sup>3</sup>

This penitence cannot be had a second time.

While, however, Tertullian announces that there is a penitence open to the sinner after Baptism, he proceeds to emphasise what he has already stated, that such penitence can only be hoped for once.

“Accordingly God foreseeing these poisons of his (the devil), although the gate of forgiveness has been closed, and brought to by the bar of Baptism, yet permits it still to stand somewhat open. In the vestibule he has stationed the second penitence, that she may open to such as knock: but now once for all, because now for the second time. But never more, because the last time it had been in vain. For is not even this *once* enough? Thou hast what thou didst not deserve, for thou hadst lost what thou hadst received.”<sup>3</sup>

New Testament references.

In his eighth chapter Tertullian refers to New Testament teaching on the subject of repentance. He cites the epistles to the churches of Asia; and three parables. These are (1) the lost piece of silver, (2) the lost sheep, and (3) the prodigal son. In the later treatise, *De Pudicitia*, Tertullian will deny that in these parables there is any authority for the remission in this life of capital sins committed after Baptism.

Tertullian's description of exomologesis as practised in the Church.

In the ninth chapter of the *De Pœnitentia* Tertullian gives a valuable description of the public penitential practice of his day. It is commonly spoken of, even by Christians of Latin speech, under the Greek name *exomologesis* (ἐξομολόγησις); a word which means *confession*, but is understood besides the confession in

<sup>1</sup> *De Pœnitentia*, C. iv.

<sup>2</sup> C. v.

<sup>3</sup> C. vii.



words to imply also the accompanying "discipline for man's prostration and humiliation."<sup>1</sup>

Preceding studies have brought before the student the *exomologesis* of the heretical teacher Cerdon at Rome; also the *exomologesis* of the women in Asia Minor of whom Irenæus relates that they admitted defilement by Marcus the Gnostic; and similar *exomologesis* by women in the districts of the Rhone. In the narrative of the penance of Natalius at Rome, while the word *exomologesis* is not employed, the actual circumstances of penance which are enumerated correspond more or less closely with the description now given by Tertullian. They include the sackcloth and ashes, the rolling at the feet of the presbyters and faithful, the employment of tears and entreaties. It is thus sufficiently clear that the *exomologesis* described by Tertullian was no merely local usage.

"The more straitened then the work of this second and only remaining repentance, the more laborious its proof, so that it may not be only borne upon the conscience within, but may be also exhibited by some outward act. This act, which finds better and more frequent expression under its Greek name, is *Exomologesis*, by which we confess our sin to the Lord, not because He knoweth it not, but inasmuch as by confession satisfaction is ordered, from confession repentance springeth, by repentance God is appeased. Wherefore *exomologesis* is a discipline for the abasement and humiliation of man, enjoining such conversation as inviteth mercy; it directeth also even in the matter of dress and food, that (the penitent) should abide in sackcloth and ashes, should disfigure his body by filthy attire, should cast down his spirit with mourning, should exchange the sins which he has committed for severe treatment: for the rest, to use simple things for meat and drink, to wit, not for the belly's, but for the soul's sake: for the most part also to cherish prayer by fasts, to groan, to weep, and to moan day and night unto the Lord his God; to throw himself upon the ground before the presbyters, and to fall on his knees before the beloved of God; to enjoin all the brethren to bear the message of his prayer for mercy. All these things doeth *exomologesis* that it may commend repentance; that by fearing danger it may honour God; that itself pronouncing judgment on the sinner, it may act instead of God's wrath, and that, by means of temporal affliction, it may—I will not say frustrate, but—discharge the eternal penalties. When therefore it casteth down a man, it rather raiseth him up: when it maketh him filthy, it rendereth him the cleaner: when it accuseth, it excuseth: when it condemneth, it

<sup>1</sup> In the *De Oratione* (7) Tertullian says that the prayer to "forgive us our trespasses" is an *exomologesis*, "because he who asks for forgiveness, confesses fault."

absolveth. In the measure in which thou sparest not thyself, in the same, be assured, will GOD spare thee.”<sup>1</sup>

From this passage it appears definitely that towards the close of the second century (c. A.D. 197) the practice of public penance at least in the churches of the West had assumed a normal or technical setting. Tertullian would witness directly for the churches of Africa; but probably also with personal knowledge of the observance of the church of Rome.<sup>2</sup> He writes as if the practice he describes was in general use. The name employed is the Greek word *ἐξομολόγησις*. This may point to an Eastern origin; and here the instance of the Asian women mentioned by Irenæus may be recalled. Or, if Rome was the starting-point of the system, the use of a Greek word would still be natural, for the church of Rome had all along been predominantly Greek. Hippolytus was still pouring forth Greek treatises in the imperial city. However this may be, the Latin Christians of the African province, with whom Greek was unfamiliar, had nevertheless taken over the Greek word as the name for the technical exercise of public penance. The word in its original significance stood only for *confession*, or, if the preposition be emphasised, for *utter* or *entire confession*. In its technical use it must be understood to convey this meaning still, but it conveys much more. It includes the whole apparatus of external penance. This may be particularised as follows:—

1. A sordid garb with fit accessories. Such are sackcloth and ashes.
2. Restriction of diet. “Simple things for meat and drink.” Fasts “to cherish prayer.”
3. Lamentation. “To groan, to weep, and to moan.”
4. Prostration before the presbyters.
5. Kneeling before the faithful.

It is not easy to determine whether the actual confession of offence was made openly before all, or, as may well have been, in the first instance to a bishop or priest. In that case any public references made afterwards by the penitent would enhance the humiliation accepted, but would hardly form an essential part of the exercise. Fifty years later, also in Africa, Cyprian will be found referring to confessions made to the bishops (*sacerdotibus*). So, too, Origen, in the East.

The object of the exomologesis so described is “to discharge the eternal penalties.” The result hoped for is that while such exomologesis “condemneth,” it at the same time “absolveth.”

It is clear from Tertullian’s description of the exomologesis of

<sup>1</sup> C. ix.

<sup>2</sup> He certainly visited Rome (*De cultu fœminarum*, I. vii.); but whether before or after his conversion does not appear.



his day that it had now assumed the formal or technical character of public penance with which for many centuries to come this investigation will be mainly concerned. The actual exercises of the penance were severe in a high degree; but more than their severity the shame of the public exposure involved in the acceptance of them was felt by many to be almost intolerable. Reluctance of offenders to make exomologesis. There might not be any requirement of public confession in word of the particulars of offence; but without this the external exercises of penance were a shameful humiliation. The shame involved. It is not surprising that a large proportion of offenders were already seeking to evade such humiliation.

“ I presume, however, that men for the most part either shun, or put off from day to day, this work, as an open exposure of themselves, being more mindful of their shame than of their health; like those who, having contracted some malady in the more hidden parts of the body, avoid making their physicians privy to it, and so perish with their bashfulness. It is forsooth intolerable to modesty to make satisfaction unto their offended Lord! to be restored to the health which they have wasted away! Brave art thou in thy modesty truly! bearing an open front in sinning, and a bashful one in praying for pardon.”<sup>1</sup>

Sinners preferred to keep their sins concealed; as if, by concealing them from the knowledge of their fellows, they could also conceal them from the knowledge of God.

“ Verily the concealment of a sin promiseth a great benefit to our modesty! namely, that if we withdraw anything from the knowledge of men, we shall of course conceal it also from God! and do you imagine that the consciousness of men and that of God are in this sort comparable? Is it better to be damned in secret than absolved openly? ‘It is a miserable thing to come thus to exomologesis.’ Yes, for by sin we are brought unto misery; but when we are to repent, the misery ceases, for what we do brings health.”<sup>1</sup>

Besides the shame, which was the chief deterrent, the actual inconveniences of penance helped to keep sinners away. The inconveniences of penance.

“ What if, besides the shame, which they think of as the more important, they also shrink from the inconveniences of the body; because they are bound to live unwashed, filthy, and without pleasure, in the roughness of sackcloth, and the grating of ashes, and with a countenance wan from fasting?”<sup>2</sup>

In his final chapter Tertullian exhorts the demurring offenders to compare exomologesis with hell. Yet let it be compared with hell.

“ If thou art drawing back from exomologesis, consider in thine heart that hell-fire which exomologesis shall quench

<sup>1</sup> C. x.

<sup>2</sup> C. xi.

for thee, and first imagine to thyself the greatness of the punishment, that thou mayest not doubt concerning the adoption of the remedy.”<sup>1</sup>

Such a remedy there is in exomologesis, which after Baptism affords a second aid against the pains of hell.

“When therefore thou knowest that after that first protection of the Baptism ordained by the Lord, thou hast yet in exomologesis a second aid against hell, why dost thou neglect thy salvation? why delay to enter on that which thou knowest will heal thee?”<sup>1</sup>

Thus to Tertullian in his Catholic days, the formal exomologesis of the Christian Church was the provided means whereby men could once obtain remission of sin after Baptism.

The *De Pudicitia*

The treatise *De Pudicitia* was written by Tertullian in his Montanist days. If it be allowed that the contemporary Roman bishop whose indulgent ruling he condemns was Callistus, of whose leniency towards offenders in the matter of purity Hippolytus has left record, the date of the treatise can be assigned within narrow limits. Callistus became bishop of Rome after the death of Zephyrinus in A.D. 218. He is said to have died in A.D. 223. His announcement of more lenient discipline for the fleshly offender may be approximately dated A.D. 220. Tertullian's treatise would follow without delay.

called forth  
by the  
action of  
Callistus.

The *De Pudicitia* is called forth by the action of Callistus, and is entirely concerned with the condemnation of that action. The first chapter contains a statement of what has occurred at Rome. It is an excellent example of the vitriolic sarcasm which Tertullian often saw fit to employ.

“I hear that there has even been an *Edict* put forth, and that a peremptory one. The *Pontifex maximus* (if you please), the bishop of bishops (by your leave) thus proclaims:—*I* (with a capital) remit the sins of adultery and fornication to those who have fulfilled their penance. O thou *Edict* on which may not be written ‘Well done!’ And where is this liberality to be posted up? Even there, I suppose, on the very portals of men's lusts, under the very advertisements of those lusts. It is in such places that this kind of penitence is to be announced; where the delinquency itself will have course. There is the place for the pardon to be read, where men will go in with the hope of it. Not so: but in the Church it is read: in the Church it is proclaimed! And the Church is a virgin!”<sup>2</sup>

It is surely the sarcasm of Tertullian which speaks of an *edict*, of a *Pontifex maximus*, of a *bishop of bishops*. The somewhat ponderous labours which would restore for us the *Edict of Callistus*

<sup>1</sup> C. xii.

<sup>2</sup> *De Pudicitia*, C. i.



are beside the mark. Yet the action of Callistus was in truth every whit as significant as Tertullian discerned it to be. Catholic Christians of a later age would gladly know more of the forceful bishop who thus dared to cast to the winds the long obsession of the rigorist tradition, and to claim for the Church of Christ the free exercise of the commission of her Lord on behalf of those who, under the fiery onsets of the lower nature, had stumbled to their fall. By origin a slave; by misfortune a victim of the Sardinian mines; he yet stands forth so markedly among men, that he is not only advanced to clerical office, but becomes for years the strong right hand of the bishop Zephyrinus; and on his death is called upon to replace him in the episcopal chair of the capital, though all the time there was to be found in Rome the great Christian scholar and writer Hippolytus. Such a man must have been of no little account.

Tertullian asserts without hesitation that pardon to offenders against purity is "contrary to the pristine discipline of the Christian name (*adversus principalem Christiani nominis disciplinam*)."

Tertullian asserts that the pardon accorded is against the pristine discipline.

"Would that the same fate might befall those too who obtruncate the true and pure integrity of the flesh; amputating not the extremest superficies, but the inmost image of modesty itself while they promise pardon to adulterers and fornicators, in the teeth of the primary discipline of the Christian name; a discipline to which heathendom itself bears such emphatic witness, that it strives to punish that discipline in the persons of our women rather by defilement of the flesh than by tortures, desiring to wrest from them what they hold dearer than life." <sup>1</sup>

Tertullian will presently elucidate his position that the three greatest or capital sins are irremissible on earth; but that other offences may find remission. In this first chapter he argues that the sins of impurity cannot be dealt with at one and the same time as being capital and as not being capital.

Sins against purity are capital sins.

"For adultery and fornication are not to be reckoned with at the same time as among the less grave sins, and as among the gravest sins, so that either course is open with regard to them; alike the solicitude which takes precaution, and the confidence which grants pardon. But since these are sins which hold the culminating height among crimes, there is no room at once for their pardon as being of moderate offence, and for precaution against them as of the gravest character." <sup>1</sup>

Referring to the Montanist community, of which he is now a member, Tertullian points out that they are very strict in such matters, not even admitting second marriage, but casting forth

Strictness of the Montanists.

<sup>1</sup> C. i.

the digamist. The adulterer and fornicator meet with the same treatment.

“The same bound of our threshold we fix for adulterers and fornicators, who are doomed to pour forth tears barren of peace, and to obtain from the Church no more than the publication of their disgrace.”<sup>1</sup>

Some sins  
are remis-  
sible; others  
irremissible.

In the second chapter Tertullian lays down his great distinction between the sins which are in this life remissible and those which are irremissible.

“We agree that the occasions of penance are sins. These we divide into two issues (*exitus*): some will be remissible, some irremissible. Conformably to this it will be doubtful to none that one set of sins are worthy of chastisement, and the other of condemnation. Every sin is dischargeable by pardon or by penalty: by pardon after chastisement, or by penalty after condemnation.”

Citing 1 S. John v. 17, “There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it,” Tertullian says that such sin is irremissible. Other sins are remissible.

“According to this difference of sins, the condition of penance also is discriminated. There will be a penance which may obtain pardon, in the case, that is to say, of a remissible offence: there will be a penance which can by no means obtain it; the case, I mean, of an irremissible offence. And it remains to investigate particularly with regard to the position of adultery and fornication, to which class of sins they ought to be assigned.”<sup>2</sup>

Penance  
without  
present  
absolution  
is yet of  
value in  
view of the  
final pardon  
of the Lord.

Meeting the objection of those who argue that a penance without present absolution is a penance in vain, Tertullian emphasises the value of penance in view of the final pardon of the Lord.

“‘Now in vain it is practised, if it is to lack pardon.’ Fitly do they employ this argument against us, who have assumed as in their own competence the fruit of this penance, I mean pardon. For as far as they are concerned from whom the (exercise of penance) obtains *man’s* peace, it is in vain. As regards ourselves who bear in mind that only the Lord remits offences, and this markedly as regards mortal offences, penance will not be performed (*agetur*) in vain. For (the penance) being referred back to the Lord, and thenceforward lying prostrate before Him, will by this very fact the rather avail to win pardon that it obtains it by entreaty from God alone; that it believes not that man’s peace is adequate to its guilt; that in the presence of the Church it will rather blush than seek communion. For before her doors it stands, and by the example of its own stigma admonishes all others,

<sup>1</sup> C. i.

<sup>2</sup> C. ii.



and calls at the same time to its own aid the tears of the brethren, and returns with an ever richer merchandise, I mean with their compassion rather than with their communion. And if it reaps not the harvest of peace here, it yet sows the seed of it with the Lord: and loses not but prepares its fruit. It will not fail of recompense, if it do not fail in duty.”<sup>1</sup>

In this passage Tertullian expresses with great clearness what appears to have been the general conviction of the rigorist school. In barring the gate of reconciliation to capital offenders on this side the grave they held that they were not hindering them from obtaining pardon, but rather helping them to find the mercy of the Lord in the great day.

In the fifth chapter Tertullian asks why, if adulterers may be reconciled, idolaters and homicides may not be reconciled. But this in the recognised practice is rightly held to be inadmissible. If adulterers reconciled, why not idolaters and homicides?

“If the offence fail to find a voice, yet the idolater is standing there (in penance), the homicide is standing there, and between them stands also the adulterer. In the ordered course of penance (*de pœnitentiæ officio*) alike they sit in sackcloth and bristle in ashes, groan with the same out-breathing, make their circuits with the same supplications, alike on bended knees they make appeal, to the same mother they address their invocations. What art thou doing, O discipline most lenient and most humane? It will be thy duty to be all this to them all, or, if not to all, then to range thyself on our side. Do you at the same time condemn the idolater and the homicide, but take the adulterer out from between them; the adulterer, who follows the idolater and leads the way for the homicide; who is the colleague of each?”<sup>2</sup>

The evidence of the actual practice of the Roman church is convincing. Tertullian can appeal to the Roman Christians themselves on the ground that their actual practice is to bar reconciliation to the idolater and the homicide. Proof of the Roman practice.

It will be noted that the *officium pœnitentiæ*, which all the capital offenders perform, involves after the preliminary standing at the doors a sitting in sackcloth and ashes, an audible groaning or moaning, a ceremonial journey of entreaty round the circle of the faithful, a supplication upon the knees, an invoking of the Church. The passage previously cited alludes also to the Roman use of the “tears of the brethren.” The officium pœnitentiæ.

To the student of the Penance of this age, who notes that the rigorists regarded the three great capital sins as irremissible upon earth, while the sins which are in modern use termed venial hardly came within the scope of Penance, the question necessarily

<sup>1</sup> C. iii.

<sup>2</sup> C. v.

What were the offences after which restoration was open?

arises: What then were the offences which after penance performed admitted of the reconciliation of the offenders? In the seventh chapter of the *De Pudicitia* Tertullian mentions some such offences.

Tertullian's enumerations.

"In this sense that which is safe may be said to have perished. Thus the *fidelis* 'perishes,' if he fall away to a public exhibition of charioteering frenzy, or of gladiatorial bloodshed, or of theatrical foulness, or athletic vanity: or if he have permitted himself to be absorbed in games, in the convivialities of secular observance, in the performance of office, in ministry to the idolatry of others: if he have impaled himself upon some word of ambiguous denial or blasphemy. For some such cause he has been driven outside the flock; or perhaps, has of his own motion, from anger, pride, or jealousy, as often happens, broken away, not deigning to accept his chastisement. It is right that he should be sought after and recalled. That which can be recovered does not 'perish,' unless it persists in remaining outside."<sup>1</sup>

The offences indicated may be compared with some specified a century later by the Council of Illiberris. The acceptance of municipal or other public office in heathen days was often found to involve the Christian in serious difficulties, the demands of the office and the requirements of Christian discipline being found incompatible.

Other examples of the minor or moderate offences for which restoration might be admitted are given by Tertullian farther on, in the nineteenth chapter, which may best be cited here.

"For here John has approved this distinction: that there are some offences of daily occurrence, to which all of us are liable. For to whom has it not happened either to be wrathful unjustly, and that beyond the going down of the sun; or again, to raise his hand to strike, or again to revile too readily, or to swear rashly, or to break an undertaking, or to tell a lie from shame or pressure of circumstance? How great are the temptations which we experience in business, in official duties, in trade, in food, in what we see, in what we hear! If for such offences pardon were not available, salvation would not be within the reach of any man. For these sins accordingly there will be pardon through Christ the prevailing intercessor with the Father."<sup>2</sup>

The deadly sins.

Continuing, he proceeds to contrast with these minor offences the sins of graver or deadly character.

"But in contrast with these there are other sins, which as being graver and of deadly character do not obtain pardon. Such are homicide, idolatry, fraud, denial, blasphemy, and also assuredly adultery, and fornication, and any other violation of the temple of God."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C. vii.

<sup>2</sup> C. xix.



Of the offences here specified the group "idolatry, fraud, denial, blasphemy" may all be forms of apostasy. If so, the *fraud* would indicate such offence as that of the libellatic. But Tertullian did not always confine the capital offences to the three specified in the Apostolic Decree. In the *Adversus Marcionem* (iv. 9) he enumerates seven offences of capital character: idolatry, blasphemy, homicide, adultery, fornication, false witness, fraud, where false witness and fraud appear to be additions.

In the *De Pœnitentia* Tertullian had cited the parables of the lost sheep, of the lost piece of money, and of the prodigal son as instances of the merciful pardon of the Lord. He now, referring to the parable of the lost piece of money or drachma, argues that it cannot cover such sins as adultery, inasmuch as adultery is clearly no drachma but a talent (C. vii.). Also he argues at length that the parable of the prodigal son is not to be understood as applicable to any person who is prodigal *after* becoming a Christian (C. ix.).

New Testament references.

A remarkable passage at the end of the ninth chapter shows that although Tertullian denied that capital offenders might be admitted to reconciliation after penance, he was entirely prepared to admit that the acceptance of martyrdom would at once effect their reconciliation.

Martyrdom restores even capital offenders.

"In fine, if it were lawful to transfer parables from their proper purpose, we should rather point to martyrdom for the hope implied in these parables: for that martyrdom alone can restore the son when all his substance is squandered; or can joyfully proclaim that the drachma is found amid any refuse, though it were a dung-heap; and will carry back into the fold on the shoulder of the Lord Himself the ewe which has wandered in wild and rugged tracks."<sup>1</sup>

Referring to the *Shepherd* of Hermas, a book which had admitted the adulterer to the special facility of penitence which it claimed to announce, Tertullian discounts its witness by depreciating its value. The "scripture of the *Shepherd*" is "the only one which loves adulterers," but the *Shepherd* "has been adjudged by every council of churches, even of your own, to have its place among the apocryphal and false writings."

Passing to definite acts of the Lord, Tertullian affirms that certain of His acts were lawful to Himself alone.<sup>2</sup> When He permitted the woman who was a sinner to wash His feet with her tears; or when He showed favour to the Samaritan woman of six husbands, who was in fact a prostitute; He was thus exercising powers which are His alone. And it must also be remembered that these persons were not Christians.

Acts of our Lord.

<sup>1</sup> C. ix.

<sup>2</sup> C. xi.

The Apostolic Decree forbids idolatry, fornication, and bloodshed.

In the twelfth chapter occurs the passage already cited which understands the Apostolic Decree as forbidding the three capital sins of idolatry, of fornication, and of bloodshed.

In the next chapter (C. xiii.), dealing with the testimony of S. Paul, he denies that the absolution in the second epistle to the Corinthians is concerned with the incestuous person cast forth in the first epistle. The following passage is interesting as regards the circumstance of the public penance.

How the adulterer now does penance at Rome.

“And you, introducing the penitent adulterer (*lit.* ‘the penance of the adulterer’) into the church to entreat the brotherhood, prostrate him in the midst (*in medium*) all in hair-cloth and ashes, arrayed in disorder and repulsiveness, before the widows, before the presbyters, laying hold of the garments of all, licking the footprints of all, clasping the knees of all.”

Penance need not involve present pardon.

In the eighteenth chapter Tertullian combats the view that the penance undergone by sinners against purity should bring pardon. He cites S. Paul's instruction to the Corinthians: “I wrote to you in an epistle not to company with fornicators, yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world . . . but now I have written unto you not to company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator. . . .” He anticipates the argument that inasmuch as God would rather have a sinner's repentance than his death, these grave sinners are only to be placed outside communion for a time, and that with a view to their restoration.

“What if at this point you should think fit to reply that communion is indeed withheld from sinners, and especially from those polluted in the flesh, but only with a view to restoration shortly, that is to say following on the circuit of penance, according to that clemency of God which prefers the repentance of a sinner to his death? For indeed this foundation of your view must be everywhere assailed. We say therefore that if it had been in accordance with the Divine clemency to show itself even to those fallen into sin after the reception of the faith, the Apostle would have said thus: ‘Have no fellowship with the works of darkness, *unless they have done penance* (*pœnitentiam egerint*)’; and ‘With such no, not to eat, *unless after, rolling on the ground, they shall have wiped the shoes of the brethren*’; and ‘If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, *unless he shall have shaken off from his head in the church the ashes of all hearths.*’ ”<sup>1</sup>

The passage illustrates the penitential practice of the day. Already the performance of public penance is known by the phrase *agere pœnitentiam*, to do penance, which will be the technical expression for it for all the centuries to come. It includes

<sup>1</sup> C. xviii.



a penitential circuit of entreaty (*ambitus pœnitentiæ*); a rolling on the ground under the feet of the brethren, which thus are "wiped"; a covering of the head with ashes, which are more or less shaken off on the floor of the church.

But, in the view of Tertullian, the baptized Christian who has lapsed into sins against purity, though he may thus do penance, has no place of pardon in this life. Such offences will be pardoned by the mercy of God to the outside heathen when they repent. For the Christian it is not so.

"Thus that clemency of God, which prefers the penitence of a sinner to his death, has regard to those hitherto in ignorance and unbelief. To set these free Christ came. But it has not regard to those who have the knowledge of God, and have learnt the sacrament of the faith (*sacramentum fidei*). But if the clemency of God is available for those in ignorance and unbelief, assuredly their penitence invites this clemency to itself: but without affecting that other kind of penitence, which has place after the reception of the faith, and which for the lighter offences can obtain pardon from the bishop, or for the graver and irremissible offences from God alone."<sup>1</sup>

The teaching of Tertullian, then, is this. For all sins committed before Baptism there is a place not only of penitence but of pardon. Sins after Baptism must be distinguished. There are the sins which are lighter or moderate (*leviora, modica*). There are the sins which are greater or very great, graver, deadly or mortal (*majora, maxima, graviora, exitiosa, mortalia*). The former are remissible in this life (*remissibilia*): the latter are not so remissible (*irremissibilia*). The remissible sins are remitted by the bishop: the irremissible are reserved for the judgment of God hereafter.

Summary of Tertullian's teaching as to graver and lighter sins.

The reference to the bishop should not be overlooked. It appears to be the first definite statement in Christian literature that the bishop is the minister of reconciliation in the ordered Penance of the Church. It may be expected that the bishop had from the first rather than others been the minister of reconciliation whenever reconciliation had been accorded; and also the minister of binding when sinners had been repelled. Dionysius of Corinth had called upon Pinytus of Cnossus to be lenient; the bishop of Sinope had repelled his son Marcion from the Christian fellowship; Zephyrinus had been the prominent figure in the penance and reconciliation of Natalius; it is Callistus who is charged by Hippolytus with reconciling the impure. But the statement of Tertullian made in the passage now cited is the

The bishop the minister of reconciliation.

<sup>1</sup> C. xviii.

earliest statement in exact words that it is the bishop who in the case of Christians remits offences other than capital.

The nineteenth chapter has a contrasted enumeration of lighter and of graver sins which has already been noticed.

The *Epistle to the Hebrews*.

Tertullian claims the epistle to the Hebrews as forbidding the reconciliation of grave offenders. He assigns its authorship to S. Barnabas (C. xx.).

The graver sins are against God.

A passage in the twenty-first chapter of the *De Pudicitia* characterises the graver sins as committed against God; whereas the minor sins are not in the same sense committed against God. This distinction will become one of the commonplaces of later Christian literature.

“But who could pardon sins? This is His alone. For ‘who can forgive sins, save GOD only?’ and specially the mortal sins which have been committed against Him, or against His temple. For, as regards thyself, the sins which are chargeable with offence against thee thou art in the person of Peter commanded to pardon even to seventy times seven.”<sup>1</sup>

The Church has the power to forgive grave sins; but spares its use.

In the same chapter Tertullian deals with the question whether the stern discipline which had been practised by the Church with regard to the capital sins had been so practised because the Church had no power to remit these sins, or because, although invested with the power, she found it better to be sparing in the use of it. Here Tertullian claims that the Church, and in a marked degree the Montanist church, has the power, but holds back its use.

“But, you say, the Church has the power of forgiving sins. This I acknowledge and adjudge more than you, for I have the Paraclete Himself affirming by the new prophets. The Church has the power to forgive sin, but I will not do it, lest (the offender) commit further sins.”<sup>1</sup>

In this matter, however, Tertullian is hardly consistent. His repeated statements that only GOD can forgive the graver sins, and that they are irremissible on earth, are not so much explained as contradicted by this passing assertion on behalf of the Montanist body.

S. Peter's commission.

The commission given to S. Peter is affirmed by Tertullian to have been personal; and not to inhere in his successors. Also Tertullian asserts that it did not cover the capital sins, which are “reserved.”

“This sentence (of the Apostolic Decree) both loosed those points of the law which are not mentioned, and bound those

<sup>1</sup> C. xxi.



which are reserved. Hence the power of loosing and binding committed to Peter had nothing to do with the capital sins of believers."

There is some unsound teaching that the authority to bind and loose inheres, not in the persons authorised by office, but in persons of spiritual character.

The Church forgives through spiritual persons.

"For the very Church is properly and primarily the Spirit Himself in Whom is the Trinity of the One Divinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. He incorporates that Church, which the Lord has established in three. And so, from that time forward, every number of persons who have associated themselves into this faith is accounted a Church from the Author and Consecrator. And accordingly the Church will, it is true, forgive sins: but it will be the Church of the Spirit, by means of a spiritual man, not the Church which is a number of bishops. For the right and arbitrament belong to the Lord, not to the servant; to God Himself, not to the priest (*sacerdotis*)."<sup>1</sup>

The twenty-second and last chapter deals with the interesting subject of the prerogative of the martyrs. The admission of the right of the martyrs to exercise this privilege in the case of the apostate has been shown in the history of the martyrs of Lyons. Tertullian himself in one of his early Catholic writings, the *Ad Martyres*, addressed to those who would be called upon to confess the Lord, had thus written:—

The prerogative of the martyrs.

"This peace some in the Church who have it not have been wont to entreat from the martyrs in prison. And so ye also for this reason are bound to possess in you this peace, and to cherish and guard it, that so ye may perchance be able to afford it also to others."<sup>2</sup>

In the *De Pudicitia* he now ridicules the claims of the martyrs to remit capital sins.

They have no authority to remit capital sins.

"But you go so far as to lavish this power on your martyrs. No sooner has any one by some collusion put on the bonds, which in the nominal custody of these days are soft enough, than adulterers beset him, fornicators approach him; at once entreaties echo around him, the tears of every polluted creature lie in pools about him, nor are there any more eager to purchase entry into the prison than those who have lost the fellowship of the Church."

But granting every qualification which a martyr could have, how is he authorised to remit reserved sins?

"Suppose now your martyr beneath the glaive with head already poised; suppose him on the cross with body already

<sup>1</sup> C. xxi.

<sup>2</sup> *Ad Martyres*, i.

outstretched; suppose him at the stake with the lion already let loose; suppose him on the axle with the fire already heaped; in the very certainty, I say, and possession of martyrdom: who permits man to condone offences which are reserved for God, by Whom these offences have been condemned without discharge, which, so far as I know, not even apostles, who were also themselves martyrs, have judged condonable.”<sup>1</sup>

The martyrdom of the adulterer himself would reconcile him, but not that of another.

If, indeed, the adulterer were himself to become a martyr, Tertullian frankly admits the reconciling efficacy of such martyrdom.

“In the act, however, of urgently entreating from a martyr pardon for adulterers and fornicators, you yourself confess that crimes of that nature are not to be washed away except by the martyrdom of the criminal himself, you who make the presumption that they can be washed away by the martyrdom of another. If this is so, then martyrdom will be another baptism.”<sup>1</sup>

As well claim for the martyrs the pardon of the homicide and the apostate, which is absurd.

If the intervention of the martyrs can avail for the pardon of the adulterer and the fornicator, it must also be available for the homicide and the apostate, a conclusion which Tertullian repudiates as obviously absurd.

“Whatsoever authority, whatsoever reason, restores ecclesiastical peace to the adulterer and the fornicator, the same will be bound to come to the aid of the murderer and the idolater when they repent; at all events, of the apostate, and in particular of him, whom in the battle of his confession, after a conflict with torture, savage cruelty has overcome. Besides, it were unworthy of God and of His mercy (Who prefers the repentance of a sinner to his death), that they should have easier return into the Church who have fallen in sexual heat, than those who have fallen fighting hand-to-hand.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus the obvious impossibility of the reconciliation by martyrs of murderers and apostates supplies an argument against the admission of such reconciliation in the case of the impure.

The Roman practice.

The evidence which has been adduced appears to necessitate the conclusion that at the time Tertullian wrote the *De Pudicitia*, it was the practice of the Roman church and of some other Western churches, as that of Africa, not to admit the apostate or the homicide to reconciliation on this side the grave. The date of the treatise has been taken above as about A.D. 220, because it must be understood to have been written immediately after the announcement of Callistus that offenders in the matter of impurity might in future be reconciled after penance. It is no less clear that in the same churches for an indefinite period

<sup>1</sup> C. xxii.



preceding the announcement of Callistus, offenders in the matter of impurity had also been regarded as inadmissible to reconciliation in this life. Those who are familiar with human frailty in the baptized can only marvel. That this class of offence could from the first only too readily find place among baptized persons at least of the second generation is clear enough from the reference of Hermas to the lewdness of his sons; and the same liability of offence in the sons of converts amid heathen surroundings is matter of familiar knowledge to any missionary of the present day. It may not unreasonably be surmised that there was fault which never found admission; and that Callistus, who had been a slave and also a man of business in the capital, had some knowledge of a seamy side to the Christian community, and desired to bring the Church into more effective relation to the actual facts of life.

However this may be, it must be held to be proved that before the announcement of Callistus adulterers and fornicators were not in the accepted order of the Church admissible to communion on this side the grave; and that after the announcement of Callistus they were so admissible.

Attention may next be given to various forms of *Church Order*.

The three known as the *Canons of Hippolytus*, the *Egyptian Church Order*, and the *Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ*, all appear to be based on a lost *Church Order*,<sup>1</sup> which in that case may be taken to be prior to Hippolytus. The *Canons of Hippolytus* are considered by Dr. Achelis to be rightly connected with the name of Hippolytus as being a compilation made by him for the use of the schismatic community in Rome of which he was for a time a bishop (c. A.D. 220).<sup>2</sup> Originally written in Greek, they owe their preservation to Arabic collections. Dr. Achelis has published a Latin version of the *Canons of Hippolytus* in the *Texte und Untersuchungen* of Gebhardt and Harnack (Bd. vi. 4).<sup>3</sup> The *Egyptian Church Order*, also originally written in Greek, is in the same way only preserved in Coptic and Ethiopic translations.<sup>4</sup> Achelis prints German renderings from these versions of the *Egyptian Church Order* side by side with the *Canones Hippolyti*, that from the Coptic by De Lagarde, and that from the

Three  
Church  
Orders.

The *Canons*  
of Hippo-  
lytus.

The *Egyptian*  
*Church*  
*Order*.

<sup>1</sup> Bishop J. Wordsworth, *The Ministry of Grace*, pp. 18 sqq. Dom. R. H. Connolly rejects the theory of a lost Church Order: *The so-called Egyptian Church Order and derived Documents*, Cambridge, 1916.

<sup>2</sup> Achelis agrees with Harnack in finding in the *Canons of Hippolytus* interpolations of a much later date.

<sup>3</sup> The *Canones Hippolyti* were published by the Benedictine Abbat Haneberg, afterwards Bishop of Spiers, in 1870. He gives the Arabic text, and a Latin translation. This translation has been revised for Achelis by the Arabic scholar, Dr. H. Vielhaber.

<sup>4</sup> There are now also published an Arabic version (Horner, *The Statutes of the Apostles*, London, 1904); and fragments of a Latin version (Hauler, *Didascalie apostolorum fragmenta veronensia latina*, Leipzig, 1900).

The *Testamentum Domini nostri Jesu Christi*.

Ethiopic by Leutholf. The *Testamentum Domini nostri Jesu Christi*, a Church Order making a false claim to the authority of our Lord, is a compilation of later date, perhaps as late as A.D. 400, but it appears to be also based on the lost Church Order.<sup>1</sup> It survives in Syriac, and has been published with a Latin translation by the Uniate patriarch Rahmani.<sup>2</sup> These various forms of Church Order are referred to in the present studies chiefly on account of the prayers assigned for use in the consecration of bishops, and in the ordination of priests, which in every case specify the commission to remit sins or to loose bonds as pertaining to the office conferred.

Prayers used at consecrations and ordinations.

Thus in the *Canones Hippolyti* the prayer appointed to be used at the consecration of a bishop runs thus:—

“Grant to him, O Lord, the episcopate and a clement spirit, and power to remit sins.”<sup>3</sup>

When a presbyter is ordained the same prayer is to be used, nothing being altered except the word rendered *episcopatum*.<sup>4</sup>

In the *Egyptian Church Order* the prayer runs:—

“That he, as is fitting, may present the Offering of Thy holy Church, and in the holy Spirit of the priestly office be endowed with the power to forgive sins according to Thy command, to perform ordinations after Thine ordinance, and to loose all the bonds of distress by virtue of the power which Thou hast given to Thine Apostles.”<sup>5</sup>

In the *Testamentum Domini nostri Jesu Christi* the following petition occurs in the prayer at the imposition of hands upon a bishop.

“Impart to him that he may have Thy spirit prevailing in power to the loosing of all bonds in like manner as Thou hast granted to Thine Apostles.”

These early instances of prayers of consecration or ordination which specify the commission of remitting sins or loosing bonds as inherent in the office of bishop or priest are of great interest. The *Canones Hippolyti* appear in that form to belong to the period now under study (c. A.D. 220). They probably in the main repeat existing forms, but with variations. Also it is thought that the text has undergone some later revision. Whether any of the forms of prayer here cited from the three Church Orders are of so early a date as the beginning of the third century cannot

<sup>1</sup> Bishop J. Wordsworth, *The Ministry of Grace*, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Rahmani, Ignatius Ephrem II, Patriarcha Antiochenus Syrorum, *Testamentum Domini nostri Jesu Christi* (Syriac and Latin), Mainz, 1899.

<sup>3</sup> Achelis, *Die Canones Hippolyti*, p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>5</sup> Translated from the German rendering of the Ethiopic by Leutholf (Ludolfus), Achelis, p. 46.



be certainly determined. The prayers are agreed in associating with the office of a bishop (or priest) a spirit which has power for the remission of sins or the loosing of bonds. If the original Greek of each Church Order were in our hands, the verbal similarity would probably be found to be greater.<sup>1</sup>

The *Canons of Hippolytus* may also be referred to for certain disciplinary regulations. Disciplinary regulations.

“65. Let every artificer know that it is in no wise lawful for him to fashion an idol, or any idolatrous figure, whether he be a goldsmith, or a silversmith or a painter or other artificer of such sort.

“66. If any artificer is found, who, after the reception of baptism, has made an article of this kind, except those things which are for the use of men, let him be excommunicated till he do penance (*pœnitentiam agat*).”

From this may be inferred that the Christian artificer who made an idol was not, like the idolater, excommunicated during the whole term of life, but only till he did penance.

Other regulations are :—

“74. A Christian is not to become a soldier voluntarily, or unless he be coerced by the officer (*duce*). If he have a sword, he is still to be careful that he do not become guilty of the crime of bloodshed.

“75. If it is shown that blood has been shed by him, let him abstain from participation of the mysteries, unless it happen that by an extraordinary alteration of conduct with tears and lamentation he shall find correction. Yet his offering must not be feigned but in the fear of GOD.”

The unsympathetic attitude of early Christianity to military service is here very noticeable.

In the following section is given a list of sins which bar Baptism till they are forsaken. In section 79 it is ordered that persons who after Baptism fall back into such sins are to be expelled from the Church till they do penance with weeping, fasting, and works of mercy.

“76. A fornicator or person seeking gain from fornication, or a sodomite, and especially a liar, and every slothful person, or diviner, or magician, or astrologer, or soothsayer, or interpreter of dreams, or juggler, or agitator (who exhorts the common people to mobs and seditions), or a person who

<sup>1</sup> The above was written before the publication of Dom. Connolly's *The so-called Egyptian Church Order and derived Documents* in 1916. Dom. Connolly maintains that “the so-called Egyptian Church Order, which has persistently been thrust into a subordinate position, is not merely the earliest of all, and the main source of each and all of the other Orders, but is in reality the work of Hippolytus, and dates accordingly from the early decades of the third century.” See also Dr. Eduard Schwartz, *Ueber die pseudo-apostolischen Kirchenordnungen*, 1910.

makes phylacteries, an usurer, an unjust person, or a lover of the world who delights in oaths (and whatever things are *sacramenta*), who gives men ground of offence, or a money-lender, or one who despises men, or selects hours and days as though some were unpropitious; all these, and all such as are like them, are neither to be instructed nor baptized, till they refrain from all such doings."

"79. But if after Baptism any are found to have relapsed into those criminal offences which we have specified, let them be expelled from the Church till they have done penance with weeping, fasting, and works of mercy."

Thus when baptized persons fall into any of the specified sins it is a matter of Church order that they be first formally expelled from the Church, this expulsion to be followed by penance, presumably more or less public, but in any case involving weeping, fasting, and good works. It is apparently to be inferred that in due course they will be restored to communion. But, in the case of the offender against purity, this would not seem to have been admitted in the community over which Hippolytus presided. Perhaps section 79 is only to be taken as a general indication of minimum requirement, where more rigorous procedure was not called for.

Origen.

The last of the Christian writers to be referred to in the period preceding the Decian persecution is the great Origen. "It is probable that he was born at Alexandria, but it has not been recorded whether he was of Egyptian, or Greek, or mixed descent."<sup>1</sup> His birth may be assigned to A.D. 182-185, and he died in his sixty-ninth year, in the reign of Gallus (A.D. 251-254). His parents were Christians, and his father Leonides suffered martyrdom under Severus in A.D. 202. After this Origen is found in charge of the Christian school at Alexandria. For twelve or thirteen years he devoted himself to the work of Christian instruction. In A.D. 215 he withdrew from Alexandria at a time of tumult, and took refuge in Palestine at Cæsarea. It was not till after his return to Alexandria in A.D. 219 that he took in hand his long series of literary labours.<sup>2</sup> Of these a considerable proportion have been preserved. Origen was ordained priest, somewhat irregularly, at Cæsarea about A.D. 230. The differences which followed between him and his bishop, Demetrius of Alexandria, need not here be considered; but in A.D. 231 Origen left Alexandria never to return, and for more than twenty years Cæsarea became his residence, and the centre of his vast literary activities. His acute and brilliant philosophical teaching; his breadth of outlook as regards the heathen writers; his threefold scheme of biblical exegesis; are all familiar to the Christian student. In his own day Origen was not less remarkable for the influence

<sup>1</sup> Bp. Westcott in *Dic. Christ. Biography*, Art. "Origenes."

<sup>2</sup> Origen had begun his studies for the *Hexapla* at an earlier date.



which he exercised over those who were brought into contact with him. Thus Gregory, afterwards known as the wonder-worker, coming to Syria as a student of the law, was, under the spell of Origen's personality, deflected into other paths, and became eventually one of the great missionary bishops of the Church.

A few passages in the voluminous writings of Origen may be referred to as bearing upon the subject of Penance.

In the *De Oratione*, a treatise which may be assigned to about A.D. 230, he makes an interesting classification of offences under three heads. There are first those minor offences against one another, which we can all forgive one another. There are at the other end of the scale sins which are incurable (*ἀνίατα* = "Incurable" sins, *The De Oratione*). The remaining sins can be remitted by spiritual men, who, like the Apostles, have been "breathed upon by Jesus," and have received the Holy Ghost. Origen adds that these men must be known by their fruit. It will be seen later that in the view of Origen a man is not in a position to exercise this ministry simply because he is commissioned, but that he must also be a spiritual man. But at any rate he who has all the qualifications "remits the sins which God remits, and retains the sins which are incurable."

"For we all have the power to forgive the trespasses committed against ourselves. This is clear from the words 'as we forgive our debtors,' and again, 'for we also forgive every one indebted to us. But he who has been breathed upon by Jesus as the apostles, and who can be discerned from his fruits as one who has received the Holy Ghost, and is become a spiritual man in that by the Spirit he is led (like the Son of God) to each one of those things which are to be done in conformity with reason; such an one remits the sins which God remits, and retains the sins which are incurable, ministering to God as the prophets ministered in saying not their own words, but those of the Divine will. Similarly he is a minister to God, Who alone has the power of remission." <sup>1</sup>

This statement with regard to the power exercised in the ministry of binding and loosing is important. The ministers do remit and do retain, but the power which they exercise is not theirs but God's, and the very words they say are, like those of the prophets, not their own words, but the words of the Divine will. They merely minister to God.

It has been seen how in the view of Origen's predecessor and teacher, Clement of Alexandria, the sins of a Christian which could not find remission upon earth were those wilfully committed; the sins, that is to say, of clear and deliberate intention. Sins which had not this character of definite intention, but to

The power exercised in binding and loosing sins is God's.

Sacrifices are not to be offered for capital sins.

<sup>1</sup> *De Oratione*, 28.

which a man was overborne "by compulsion or persuasion," might find remission in the Church. In this view Origen follows Clement.

"It is of service to take an example from the law for the better understanding of the remission of sins which is given to men by God through the ministry of men. The priests according to the law are forbidden to offer sacrifice for certain sins, that their offences may be forgiven to those for whom the sacrifices are offered. And nowhere does the priest who has the power to make an offering for certain involuntary sins or transgressions, offer a holocaust for adultery, or intentional bloodshed, or any crime of the graver sort, or (capital) sin. Thus, accordingly, also the apostles and those who, like the apostles are priests after the pattern of the great High Priest, having received the knowledge of the worship of God, know, being taught by the Spirit, for what sins it is fitting to offer sacrifices, and also when and in what fashion, and further know for what sins it is not right to do so." <sup>1</sup>

Origen  
condemns  
the licence  
of absolu-  
tion as-  
sumed by  
some.

Adultery and intended bloodshed are thus specified as having the character of wilfulness which precludes reconciliation, and in the passage next to be cited idolatry is similarly specified. Thus Origen is in agreement with the other rigorist teachers of the second and third centuries in treating these three capital sins as outside the scope of the loosing office of the Church. He refers in terms of reprobation to the licence of absolution which has been assumed by some.

"Some there are who, overstepping the bounds of the priestly dignity (how they do it I do not know; perhaps because they do not accurately discern the priestly science), boast themselves as being able also to condone idolatries, and to remit adulteries and fornications, as if through their prayer for those who have dared these things, even the sin unto death is washed away. For they do not read this: 'There is a sin unto death; I do not say that any should pray for it.' " <sup>1</sup>

Commen-  
tary on S.  
John.

Origen's *Commentary on the Gospel of S. John* appears to have been among the earliest of his writings. It may be assigned to A.D. 228-231. In it (Tom. ii. 6) he has a passage on the subject of the Unpardonable Sin.

The Un-  
pardonable  
Sin.

"And in the Gospel He promises forgiveness for the sins committed against Himself, but pronounces with regard to blasphemy against the Holy Ghost that not only will there not be forgiveness in this present time for the man who utters evil against Him, but also not in the time to come. And it may be that forgiveness is withheld from him who has sinned against the Spirit not altogether because the Spirit has a

<sup>1</sup> *De Oratione*, 28.



priority of honour to the Christ, but because all reasonable beings have a share in the Christ, and to these pardon is accorded when they depart from their sins : but in the case of those who are deemed worthy of the Holy Spirit, it is fitting that they should obtain no pardon, who with an inspiration so great and of such sort fall again into evil, and thrust aside the counsels of the indwelling Spirit."

Are we here to understand that in Origen's view the capital sins of Christians, being committed against the indwelling Spirit, have the unpardonable character? As regards the sin of apostasy this view no doubt had its supporters.

In the *Exhortation to Martyrdom* (c. A.D. 235) Origen gives expression to the now accepted belief that martyrdom at once effects the remission of offence. That it does this is one important ground of encouragement to those who may be called upon to testify. Another ground of encouragement is that their martyrdom may be of service in obtaining forgiveness for others.

*Exhortation to Martyrdom.*

"Let us remember wherein we have sinned, and that there is no receiving remission of sins without Baptism; and that, according to the laws of the Gospel it is not possible to be baptized a second time with water and the Spirit for the remission of sins; and that the baptism of Martyrdom is given to us. For thus it has been named, as is clear when to the words 'Can ye drink of the cup which I drink of' there is added 'or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.' In another place it has been said: 'I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.' Consider too whether the baptism by way of Martyrdom, as that of the Christ was the purging of the world, so this too may be cleansing for the healing of many. For as those who served the altar according to the law of Moses seemed to minister forgiveness of sins to them of old by the blood of bulls and of goats, so the souls of those who were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, serving the altar in heaven not in vain, minister the remission of sins to those who supplicate."<sup>1</sup>

*Martyrdom effects remission of sins,*

*and is of service in obtaining remission for others.*

The *Homilies on Leviticus* belong to the later years of Origen's activity. The notes preserved were taken down from his spoken addresses. Except for a few fragments they survive only in the Latin of Rufinus. In the second of these *Homilies* there is given a list of seven means of remission of sin. It is interesting and important in itself. It is also interesting as ante-dating by more than a century the lists of alternative means of remission which form so marked a feature of the teaching of S. Chrysostom at Antioch and at Constantinople. And it is farther

*Homilies on Leviticus.*

*Origen's seven means of remission.*

<sup>1</sup> *Exhortatio ad Martyrium*, 30.

interesting as having been reproduced again and again in the penitential literature of Western Europe in the ninth century.

Origen supposes the objection made by a Christian that Christians, who have only forgiveness in Baptism, are worse off than those who under the old law had a remedy by sacrifices. His reply is that it is only fitting that the discipline of a Christian should be stricter than that of others; but that notwithstanding there are a variety of means of remission indicated in the Gospels.

“The first is that we are baptized for the remission of sins. The second remission is in the endurance of martyrdom. The third is that which is accorded for almsgiving. For the Saviour saith: ‘But rather give alms . . . and behold all things are clean unto you.’ The fourth remission of sins is made to us when we also remit sins to our brethren. For so our Lord and Saviour Himself saith: ‘For if ye forgive men their trespasses from your heart, your Father will also forgive your trespasses to you. But if ye do not forgive your brethren from your heart, neither will your Father forgive you’; and as in the Prayer He has taught us to say, ‘Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.’ The fifth remission of sins is when any shall have turned the sinner from the error of his way. For so saith the divine Scripture, ‘that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way saveth a soul from death, and hideth a multitude of sins.’ Next the sixth remission is by fulness of love, as the Lord Himself saith: ‘Verily I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much.’ And the Apostle saith: ‘For charity shall cover the multitude of sins.’ In addition there is a seventh remission of sins, though it is hard and toilsome, by means of penance (*per pœnitentiam*), when the sinner bathes his couch in tears, and his tears are made his bread day and night, and when he does not shrink (*erubescit*) from showing his sin to the priest of the Lord, and from seeking the remedy, after the pattern of him who saith, ‘I said I will confess my sin unto the Lord, and so Thou forgavest the wickedness of my sin.’ In this also is fulfilled the instruction given by S. James, ‘But if any is sick let him call the presbyters of the Church, and let them lay their hands upon him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and if he be in sins, they shall be remitted to him.’<sup>1</sup>

Origen proceeds to make a comparison between each of these modes of remission and the methods of the law of Leviticus. Of the seventh means of remission, that of Penance, he says:—

“But if thou art overwhelmed in grief and tears and lamentations in the bitterness of thy weeping; if thou macerate thy flesh and parch it by much abstinence; and if thou say, ‘My bones are fried as a frying-pan’; then know

<sup>1</sup> In *Leviticum*, Hom. 2.



that thou hast offered a sacrifice of wheat-flour as from the baking-pan or gridiron: and in this way thou art found, in accordance with the Gospel, offering the sacrifice which Israel cannot now offer in accordance with the law.”<sup>1</sup>

An analysis of Origen’s seven modes of remission shows

- (1, 2) Baptism and Martyrdom, which are recognised as effectual for all sins great and small;
- (3, 4, 5, 6) Almsgiving, forgiveness of others, conversion of sinners, fulness of love; the scope of which is not indicated, but which are not understood to meet the case of the capital sins; and
- (7) Penance, which is not called for by the more venial sins, and is not effectual in present remission of the capital sins, but which has its place for serious sins falling short of the capital character.

This Penance (*pœnitentia*) is characterised by

is characterised by (a) confession to a priest,

- (a) The showing of the sin to the priest of the Lord (*sacerdoti Domini*) and the seeking from him the remedy (*medicinam*), a procedure which at the same time complies with the instruction of S. James in the case of the sick; and

- (b) A character of affliction, which has an outward manifestation in tears and lamentations, in fasting and abstinence.

(b) outward affliction.

This is important. Origen, teaching at Cæsarea towards the middle of the third century, here indicates that those persons who submit to the Penance of the Church make their confession to a “priest of the Lord,” who indicates the penance or penalty. This penance then takes the severe form of the early exomologesis. S. Cyprian will be found similarly to speak of confessions made to the priest. And these passages point to a procedure which was probably normal. The confession of the penitent does not appear to be made in the open congregation but to the priest, who hears it and indicates the measure of the penance. The penance is an open and public humiliation.

The confession is not in the open congregation.

In the fourteenth of these *Homilies* Origen compares sin to the “wood, hay, stubble” which may be built upon the foundation of Christ. The various sins are thus more or less readily overcome by fire, that is, by suitable penalty.

He points out how neither continuance in the communion of the Church, nor rejection from it by the action of the bishop, will always correspond to the hidden realities.

Church action in restoring or rejecting a penitent not always in accord with the hidden realities.

“For he has gone forth from truth, from the fear of God, from faith, from love, as we have said above, howsoever by such sins any go forth from the camp of the Church, though

<sup>1</sup> In *Leviticum*, Hom. 2.

he be in no wise cast forth by the voice of the bishop. Similarly, on the other hand, it sometimes happens that a man may be expelled by the wrong judgment of those who are over the Church, and thrust outside. But he has not really gone forth, that is to say, if he has not so acted that he deserved to go forth, he is not harmed by the fact that he is in appearance expelled by men on such a wrong judgment. And so it comes about that sometimes he who is thrust out is really within; and he without who in appearance is retained within.”<sup>1</sup>

In the fifteenth *Homily* the following passage occurs:—

Crimes and  
faults.  
A confused  
passage.

“For those abodes, if a fall happen to any, as we have seen above, there is always the opportunity to recover, as, for example, if a deadly fault have found us, which is not of the character of deadly crime, not in blasphemy of the faith, which is girt round by the wall of ecclesiastical and apostolical doctrine, but an offence which consists in some fault of speech or conduct; this it is to have sold the house which is in the field or in the unwallled hamlet. So this sale and this sort of fault can always be repaired, nor is it ever forbidden thee to render penitence for faults of this kind. For in the graver crimes the place of penitence is conceded once only: but these common faults which we often incur always admit penitence, and continually find remission.”<sup>2</sup>

This passage has probably been obscured in the translation, which was made when the distinctions of the earlier time were no longer accepted or understood. As the passage stands, a “deadly fault” (*culpa mortalis*) is contrasted with a “deadly crime” (*crimen mortale*). The use of the word *mortalis* for each of these is awkward. Yet it corresponds to fact that not only were the “crimes,” blasphemy of the faith with other capital offences, deadly; but that by many faults of speech or conduct a man might “go forth from truth, from the fear of God, from faith, from love,” as Origen wrote in the passage lately cited, and so exclude himself from the life of the Christian. Such faults are open to penitence.

It is not, however, easy to understand the entire passage as it is found in the Latin. “In the graver crimes the place of penitence is conceded once only: but these common faults which we often incur always admit penitence, and continually find remission.” It has been seen that the teaching of Origen elsewhere would represent the capital offences of idolatry, impurity and bloodshed as remissible only in Baptism or in Martyrdom; the graver offences after these as remissible to baptized offenders by means of Penance; while a power of remission for some classes of sin is to be expected in the exercise of almsgiving, of the forgiveness of others, of the conversion of sinners, of fulness of love.

<sup>1</sup> In *Leviticum*, *Hom.* 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Hom.* 15.



In the first *Homily on Psalm xxxvii*. Origen expresses himself as understanding that the person restored by S. Paul in the second epistle to the Corinthians was the incestuous person excommunicated in the first epistle.

*Homilies on the Psalms.*

The incestuous Corinthian restored.

In the second *Homily* on the same Psalm Origen has a passage with regard to the choice of the person to whom one troubled by sin may make confession.

Choice of a physician to whom to confess.

“Only look about thee carefully for the person to whom thou shouldest confess thy sin. First approve the physician to whom thou shouldest lay bare the cause of thine ailment, who knows how to be infirm with the infirm, to weep with those who weep, who is familiar with the discipline of sympathy in mourning and in suffering: so that in fine if he shall have said aught, who first has showed himself a learned and merciful physician, if he shall have given any counsel, thou wilt act upon it and will follow it; if he have understood and foreseen that thine ailment is such as needs to be exposed and to be cured in the gathering of the whole Church, from which it may be others too can be edified, and thou thyself readily healed; this will have to be arranged with much deliberation and with the experienced counsel of that physician.”

This passage is of much interest as giving instructions for a confession of sin which is in the first place independent of any undertaking of public penance. It has been seen that Origen speaks in another passage of such confession as made to a priest: as also does Cyprian. In the present passage the physician of the soul is nowhere styled a priest, but the sort of experience which he is required to have could seldom fall to a layman. When this physician has heard the confession he may or may not indicate the public penance of the Church as the proper remedy. If he do, the sinner should act on his instructions.

In the *Commentary on S. Matthew*, treating of our Lord's commission of the keys to S. Peter, Origen gives expression to the view already noticed that the bishops of the Church are authorised to exercise this commission, but only if they are not bound by sin themselves.

*Commentary on S. Matthew.*

Bishops absolving must be free from sin.

“For since those who claim the place of the episcopate exercise this commission like Peter, and, having taken the keys of the kingdom of heaven from the Saviour, teach that whatsoever things are bound by them, that is to say, condemned, are bound also in heaven, and that those matters which have received remission from them are loosed also in heaven; it is to be said that they rightly affirm this, if they have the ministry (*ἐργον*) on account of which it was said to Peter, ‘Thou art Peter’; and if they are men of such sort that upon them the Church is built by Christ, and

that to them this saying would rightly be ascribed. And the gates of hell ought not to prevail against him when he wills to bind or loose. But if he is bound by the chains of his sins it is in vain that he either binds or looses.

But if any, not being Peter, and not having the qualities I have indicated, think like Peter so to bind upon earth that what things are bound are bound also in heaven, and so to loose upon earth that what things are loosed are loosed also in heaven, this man is blinded, not understanding the meaning of the Scriptures, and being lifted up with pride has fallen into the condemnation of the devil.”<sup>1</sup>

The Church of after ages has not followed Origen in his rejection of the validity of the ministrations of unworthy ministers. Yet all must sympathise in the shudder with which he regards the exercise by such men of their high prerogative.

Farther on in the same *Commentary*, adverting to our Lord's instruction, “If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone,” Origen gives contrasted examples of the graver and the lighter sins.

A contrast  
of the  
graver and  
the lighter  
sins.

“For, as he who says that such words were uttered of every sin, whether that sin be bloodshed, or poisoning, or sodomy, or any such like, has afforded occasion to the imagination to picture the extreme patience and long-suffering of Christ; so, on the other hand, he who has distinguished a brother from him who is called a brother, a man who on account of the small offences to which men are liable, and who after reproof is not converted, teaches that he is to be held as a heathen and a publican on account of sins which are not unto death, or as the law styles them in *Numbers* not ‘death-bearing’; which seems to be too harsh. For I do not think that any would be readily found who was not thrice convicted of the same sort of sin, as, for instance, of backbiting, whereby backbiters abuse their neighbours, or of passionate anger, or of excess in drink, or of untruthful or idle speech, or of any sins of general occurrence.”<sup>2</sup>

Summary  
of Origen's  
views.

Origen is a representative of Eastern Christianity. His life was spent between Alexandria and Cæsarea. It is the more noteworthy that in the matter of Penance he stands on the rigorist side. He regards the capital and wilful sins as incurable upon earth. For other sins, serious but not in the same way sins unto death, there is a way to forgiveness open through Penance. For minor sins recognised modes of remission are available through almsgiving, forgiveness of others, conversion of sinners, fulness of love. Origen shares the now accepted view that Martyrdom effects the remission of all offence. Origen has

<sup>1</sup> *In Matthæum*, xvi. 18; *Tom.* xii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, *Tom.* xiii.



no doubt read Tertullian : and it is probably from Tertullian that he derives his view that it is insufficient for the administration of Penance that a bishop be duly consecrated unless he be also a spiritual person. If so qualified, he exercises a power, and uses words, which are not his own but God's. The Penance of the Church which the bishops thus administer is characterised by (a) confession to the priest of the Lord (*sacerdoti Domini*), (b) circumstances of affliction. The Latin is the Latin of Rufinus, and the word *sacerdos* is not necessarily confined to bishops, as it is in the use of S. Cyprian.

Commodianus, the earliest Christian poet known to us, wrote about the middle of the third century. It has been thought that he lived at least in his mature years in North Africa. He had been born of heathen parents; and was brought to the Christian faith by the Holy Scriptures. He seems to have been a Patripassian and a Chiliast. A manuscript calls him a bishop. As a poet he is interesting. He writes verses which are meant to be hexameters, but which neglect the rules of quantity in favour of the accepted accent. He is thus a pioneer of the Latin Christian poets of later ages. One of his *Instructiones* is addressed to penitents, and corroborates the testimony of Tertullian as to the practices of the public penance of the time.

“Accordingly I counsel those who have received a wound to proceed cautiously, to foul their beard and hair in the dust of the earth, and to roll in sackcloth, and to seek of the Highest King, that He will come to thy succour, lest perchance thou perish from the people.”

On a general survey of the period which has been under review in this chapter, that is to say, the century from A.D. 150 to A.D. 250, the student cannot fail to be impressed by the marked agreement of the great Christian writers in favour of a severe or rigorist discipline. At Alexandria Clement holds with Hermas that the normal situation is to admit only the penitence preceding Baptism, but that after Baptism Penance may be admitted once for sins not properly wilful. He, however, follows Hermas in admitting the reconciliation of a penitent adulteress. At Rome Hippolytus strongly condemns the new policy of Callistus, which throws open the gate of reconciliation to offenders in the matter of purity. At Carthage Tertullian in the *De Pudicitia* makes an onslaught on the same policy as altogether inadmissible, and it is clear from his treatise that in the church of Rome prior to the action of Callistus offenders in the matters of idolatry, bloodshed, and impurity were all alike held to stand outside the possibility of reconciliation in this life, and that the same standpoint was accepted in the African churches. At the close of the period Origen, who may be expected to represent the temper of the

Commodianus.

The writers of this period favour rigorism.

Clement.

Hippolytus.

Tertullian.

Origen.

churches at once of Egypt and of Syria, is similarly severe, and writes of those who overstep the bounds of the priestly dignity in assuming to condone idolatries, and to remit adulteries and fornications. Such sins to Origin are sins incurable (*ἀνίατα*).

But there was also a body of opinion for leniency.

Dionysius of Corinth.

Callistus.

Thus the principal writers of the period are agreed in an attitude of severity. Yet there had doubtless also been throughout this period a body of opinion which made for leniency or mercy. One foremost representative of the lenient temper was Dionysius of Corinth (*c.* A.D. 171), whose attitude may have been traditional in the church of Corinth, but was not characteristic of all the churches of Greece, since Pinytus of Cnossus stood on the rigorist side. But the outstanding champion of the present mercy of the Lord to the penitent offender in fleshly sins was Callistus, bishop of Rome. His courageous action in openly declaring that the reconciliation of the Church would in future be open to offenders of this class after due penance performed proved to be one of the great turning points in the history of Penance in the Christian Church. At Rome it found general but not universal adhesion, and a schism for a time took shape, it would seem, under the leadership of Hippolytus. And the angry accents of Tertullian came hectoring across the seas. But, notwithstanding, the clemency of Callistus held. One by one the churches of Christendom followed the lead which was given. In the first half of the fourth century it is only among the separatists that the old rigorism is still practised. And never again in the long history of the Catholic Church will the sorrowing victim of fleshly frailty find the portals of Christ's mercy barred against him.



## IV. THE DECIAN PERSECUTION

(FROM JANUARY A.D. 250)

### TEXT OF AUTHORITIES

S. Cyprian (baptized, A.D. 246 ; priest, A.D. 247 ; bishop, A.D. 248 ; martyr, A.D. 258).

The Roman Clergy, A.D. 250-252.

(Letters in S. Cyprian's collection.)

Lucianus, an African confessor.

(Letters in S. Cyprian's collection.)

Caldonius, bishop of an unknown African see.

(Letters in S. Cyprian's collection.)

Councils of Carthage under Cyprian.

(Letters in S. Cyprian's collection.)

Two " libelli " of actual libellatics.

Ad Novatianum.

Contra Novatianum.

S. Dionysius of Alexandria.

(In Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History.)

[*The Roman clergy on Cyprian's retirement before persecution.*]

The Roman Clergy (Jan. A.D. 250).

(Cyprian) *Ep.* ii. (Oxf. viii.).

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 228.]

*Cleri Romani ad Clerum Carthaginensem.*

Didicimus secessisse benedictum papam Cyprianum, a Crementio subdiacono, qui a vobis ad nos venit, certa ex causa : quod utique recte fecerit, propterea quod sit persona insignis. Et imminente agone quem permisit Deus in sæculo colluctandi causa cum adversario simul cum servis suis, volens etiam angelis et hominibus certamen hoc manifestare, ut qui vicerit coronetur, victus vero reportaverit in se sententiam, quæ nobis manifestata est. Et cum incumbat nobis, qui videmur præpositi esse et vice pastoris custodire gregem, si negligentes inveniamur, dicetur nobis quod et antecessoribus nostris dictum est, qui tam negligentes præpositi erant, quoniam perditum non requisivimus, et errantem non correximus, et claudum non colligavimus, et lac eorum edebamus, et lanis eorum operiebamur. Denique et ipse Dominus

**The Roman Clergy.**

implens quæ erant scripta in lege et prophetis docet dicens : *Ego sum pastor bonus, qui pono animam meam pro ovibus meis. Mercenarius autem et cujus non sunt propriæ oves, cum viderit lupum venientem, relinquit et fugit, et lupus dispergit eas.*

[*The lapsed not abandoned but exhorted to repent if in any wise they may receive pardon from Him Who is able to grant it.*]

Ep. ii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 232.]

. . . quos quidem separatos a nobis non dereliquimus, sed ipsos cohortati sumus, et hortamur agere pœnitentiam, si quo modo indulgentiam poterunt recipere ab eo qui potest præstare, ne, si relictî fuerint a nobis, pejores efficiantur.

[*The lapsed to be encouraged to confess if apprehended a second time. Also in cases of sickness they may be admitted to communion.*]

Ep. ii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 232.]

Vidatis ergo fratres quoniam et vos hoc facere debetis, ut etiam illi qui ceciderunt hortatu vestro corrigentes, animos eorum, si apprehensi fuerint iterato, confiteantur, ut possint priorem errorem corrigere, et alia quæ incumbunt vobis; quæ etiam et ipsa subdidimus, ut si qui in hanc tentationem inciderunt, cœperint apprehendi infirmitate, et agant pœnitentiam facti sui et desiderent communionem, utique subveniri eis debet.

[*The indiscipline and scandalous conduct of certain confessors.*]

**S. Cyprian**, bishop of Carthage (bp. A.D. 248–258).

Ep. v. (Oxf. xiv.).

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 239.]

*Ad presbyteros et diaconos.*

3. Doleo enim quando audio quosdam improbe et insolenter discurrere et ad ineptias vel ad discordias vacare; Christi membra, et jam Christum confessa, per concubitus illicitos inquinari, nec a diaconis aut presbyteris regi posse, sed id agere ut per paucorum pravos et malos mores multorum et bonorum confessorum gloria honesta maculetur.

[*Cyprian will do nothing alone, without the clergy and people.*]

Ep. v.

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 240.]

4. . . . solus rescribere nihil potui, quando a primordio Episcopatus mei statuerim nihil sine consilio vestro, et sine consensu plebis, mea privatim sententia gerere. Sed, cum ad vos per Dei gratiam venero, tunc de iis quæ vel gesta sunt vel gerenda, sicut honor mutuus poscit, in commune tractabimus.



## S. Cyprian.

[*Instances of scandalous conduct of confessors.*]

Ep. vi. (Oxf. xiii.).

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 244.]*Ad Rogatianum presbyterum et ceteros confessores.*

Quid deinde illud, quam vobis execrandum debet videri, quod cum summo animi nostri gemitu et dolore cognovimus non deesse qui Dei templa et post confessionem sanctificata et illustrata membra turpi et infami concubitu suo plus maculent, cubilia sua cum feminis promiscua jungentes, quando, etsi stuprum conscientiae eorum desit, hoc ipso grande crimen est quod illorum scandalo in aliorum ruinas exempla nascuntur.

[*Order of reconciliation at Carthage. How some disregard it.*]

Ep. ix. (Oxf. xvi.).

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 257.]*Ad presbyteros et diacones.*

2. Nam cum in minoribus peccatis agant peccatores pœnitentiam justo tempore, et, secundum disciplinæ ordinem, ad exomologesim veniant, et per manus impositionem episcopi et cleri jus communicationis accipiant—nunc crudo tempore, persecutione adhuc perseverante, nondum restituta Ecclesiæ ipsius pace, ad communicationem admittuntur et offertur nomine eorum, et nondum pœnitentia acta, nondum exomologesi facta, nondum manu eis ab episcopo et clero imposita, Eucharistia illis datur, cum scriptum sit: Qui ederit panem aut biberit calicem Domini indique, reus erit corporis et sanguinis Domini.

[*To the martyrs and confessors on the abuse of their indulgences. Disregard of the accepted discipline.*]

Ep. x. (Oxf. xv.).

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 260.]*Ad martyres et confessores.*

1. Sed nunc cum maximo animi dolore cognosco non tantum illic vobis non suggeri divina præcepta, sed adhuc potius impediri, ut ea quæ a vobis ipsis et circa Deum caute et circa sacerdotem Dei honorifice fiunt, a quibusdam presbyteris resolvantur, qui nec timorem Dei nec episcopi honorem cogitantes (cum vos ad me litteras direxeritis, quibus examinari desideria vestra et quibusdam lapsis pacem dari postulatis cum, persecutione finita, convenire in unum cum clero et recolligi cœperimus) illi, contra Evangelii legem, contra vestram honorificam petitionem, ante actam pœnitentiam, ante exomologesim gravissimi atque extremi delicti factam, ante manum ab episcopo et clero in pœnitentiam impositam, offerre pro illis et Eucharistiam dare, id est, sanctum Domini corpus profanare audeant, cum scriptum sit: Qui ederit panem aut biberit calicem Domini indique, reus erit corporis et sanguinis Domini.

**S. Cyprian.**

[*The libelli of the martyrs must bear the names of those commended.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 262.]

4. De hoc et ad clerum et ad plebem litteras feci, quas utrasque vobis legi mandavi. Sed et illud ad diligentiam vestram redigere et emendare debetis, ut nominatim designetis eos quibus pacem dari desideratis. Audio enim quibusdam sic libellos fieri ut dicatur: "Communicet ille . . . cum suis," quod numquam omnino a martyribus factum est, ut incerta et cæca petitio invidiam nobis postmodum cumulet. Late enim patet quando dicitur "ille cum suis," et possunt nobis viceni et triceni et amplius offerri qui propinqui et affines et liberti ac domestici esse asseverentur ejus qui accipit libellum. Et ideo peto ut eos quos ipsi videtis, quos nostis, quorum pœnitentiam satisfactioni proximam conspiciatis, designetis nominatim libello, et sic ad nos fidei ac disciplinæ congruentes litteras dirigatis.

[*The requests of the martyrs shall be duly considered in each case.*]

*Ep. xi. (Oxf. xvii.).*

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 263.]

*Ad plebem.*

1. Fecerunt ad nos de quibusdam beati martyres litteras petentes examinari desideria sua. Cum pace nobis omnibus a Domino prius data ad ecclesiam regredi cœperimus, tunc examinabuntur singula præsentibus et judicantibus vobis.

[*Some presbyters have communicated the lapsed—without waiting for the due discipline.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 263.]

3. Audio quosdam de Presbyteris nec Evangelii memores, nec quid ad nos martyres scripserint cogitantes, nec Episcopo honorem sacerdotii sui et cathedræ reservantes, jam cum lapsis communicare cœpisse et offerre pro illis, et Eucharistiam dare, quando oporteat ad hæc per ordinem perveniri. Nam cum in minoribus delictis, quæ non in Deum committuntur, pœnitentia agatur justo tempore, et Exhomologesis fiat, inspecta vita ejus qui agit pœnitentiam, nec ad communicationem quis venire possit, nisi prius illi ab episcopo et clero manus fuerit imposita, quanto magis in his gravissimis et extremis delictis, caute omnia et moderate secundum disciplinam Domini observari oportet.

[*Lapsi, who have received certificates from the martyrs, may in peril of sickness be reconciled by a priest or even by a deacon, with imposition of hands, on confession of sin.*]

*Ep. xii. (Oxf. xviii.).*

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 265.]

*Ad presbyteros et diacones.*

1. Quoniam tamen video facultatem veniendi ad vos nondum esse et jam æstatem cœpisse, quod tempus infirmitatibus assidu



**S. Cyprian.**

et gravibus infestatur, occurrendum puto fratribus nostris, ut qui libellos a martyribus acceperunt, et prærogativa eorum apud Deum adjuvari possunt si incommodo aliquo et infirmitatis periculo occupati fuerint, non expectata præsencia nostra, apud presbyterum quemcunque præsentem, vel, si presbyter repertus non fuerit, ut urgere exitus cœperit, apud diaconum quoque exomologesin facere delicti sui possint, ut manu eis in pœnitentiam imposita veniant ad Dominum cum pace quam dari martyres litteris ad nos factis desideraverunt.

[*The penitent lapsed, though unreconciled, will not be left destitute of the help and aid of the Lord, but will be cared for by a Divine remedy.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 265.]

2. Cæteram quoque partem plebis quæ lapsa est præsencia vestra fovete, et, ut a fide et misericordia Domini non deficient vestro solatio focillate. Neque enim deserentur ab ope et auxilio Domini hi qui mites et humiles et pœnitentiam vere agentes in bonis operibus perseveraverint, quominus illis quoque divino remedio consulatur.

[*In case of sickness those who have martyrs' recommendations may be reconciled: others must await the peace of the Church.*]

*Ep. xiii. (Oxf. xix.).*

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 266.]

*Ad presbyteros et diacones.*

2. Quoniam tamen significastis quosdam immoderatos esse, et communicationem accipiendam festinanter urgere; et desiderastis in hac re formam a me vobis dari, satis plene scripsisse me ad hanc rem proximis litteris ad vos factis credo; ut qui libellum a martyribus acceperunt, et auxilio eorum adjuvari apud Dominum in delictis suis possunt, si premi infirmitate aliqua et periculo cœperint, Exhomologesi facta, et manu eis a vobis in pœnitentia imposita, cum pace a martyribus sibi promissa ad Dominum remittantur. Cæteri vero qui nullo libello a martyribus accepto invidiam faciunt; quoniam non paucorum, nec Ecclesiæ unius aut unius provinciæ, sed totius orbis hæc causa est, expectent de Domini protectione Ecclesiæ ipsius publicam pacem.

[*The lapsed, who desire speedy peace, have still the martyrs' crown open to them.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 267.]

Qui si nimium properant, habent in sua potestate quod postulant, tempore ipso sibi plus quam postulant largiente. Acies adhuc geritur, et agon quotidie celebratur. Si commissi vere et firmiter pœnitent et fidei calor prævalet, qui differri non potest, potest coronari.

**S. Cyprian.**

[Thousands of libelli given daily by the martyrs to the lapsed.]

*Ep. xiv. (Oxf. xx.).*

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 269.]

*Ad presbyteros et diacones Romæ consistentes.*

2. Item cum comperissem eos qui sacrilegis contactibus manus suas atque ora maculassent, vel nefandis libellis nihilominus conscientiam polluisent, exambire ad martyres passim, confessores quoque importuna et gratiosa deprecatione corrumpere, ut sine ullo discrimine atque examine singulorum darentur quotidie libellorum millia contra Evangelii legem, litteras feci quibus martyres et confessores consilio meo quantum possem ad Dominica præcepta revocarem.

[A lapsed person who holds the libellus of a martyr may on the approach of death be received, if he have made exomologesis and received imposition of hands after penance.]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 269.]

3. Postmodum vero, cum quidam de lapsis, sive sua sponte, sive aliquo incitatore, audaci flagitatione proruerent ut pacem sibi a martyribus et confessoribus promissam extorquere violento impetu niterentur, de hoc etiam bis ad clerum litteras feci et legi eis mandavi, ut ad illorum violentiam interim quoquo genere mitigandam, si qui libello a martyribus accepto de sæculo excederent, exomologesi facta et manu eis in pœnitentiam imposita, cum pace sibi a martyribus promissa ad Dominum remitterentur. Nec in hoc legem dedi, aut me auctorem temere constitui.

[Cyprian has concurred in the judgment of the Roman clergy by admitting the lapsed to reconciliation in sickness—if they have recommendations from the martyrs.]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 270.]

3. Sed, cum videretur et honor martyribus habendus et eorum qui omnia turbare cupiebant impetus comprimendus, et præterea vestra scripta legissem quæ huc ad clerum nostrum per Cremen-tium hypodiaconum nuper feceratis, ut iis qui post lapsum infirmitate apprehensi essent, et pœnitentes communicationem desiderarent, subveniretur, standum putavi et cum vestra sententia, ne actus noster, qui adunatus esse et consentire circa omnia debet, in aliquo discreparet. Plane cæterorum causas, quamvis libello a martyribus accepto, differri mandavi et in nostram præsentiam reservari, ut cum, pace a Domino nobis data, plures præpositi convenire in unum cœperimus, communicato etiam vobiscum consilio, disponere singula et reformare possimus.



[*A confessor's certificate in general terms, written by one Lucianus.*]

**Lucianus.**

(Cyprian) *Ep.* xvi. (Oxf. xxiii.). [Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 275.]

*Confessorum ad Cyprianum.*

Universi confessores Cypriano papæ salutem. Scias nos universis de quibus apud te ratio constiterit quid post commissum egerint, dedisse pacem, et hanc formam per te et aliis episcopis innotescere volumus. Optamus te cum sanctis martyribus pacem habere. Præsente de clero et exorcista et lectore, Lucianus scripsit.

[*Cyprian will not anticipate the decision as to the letters of the martyrs, which awaits the peace of the Church. Many of his colleagues concur.*]

**S. Cyprian.**

*Ep.* xvii. (Oxf. xxvi.). [Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 277.]

*Ad presbyteros et diacones.*

Legi autem et universorum confessorum litteras quas voluerunt per me collegis omnibus innotescere et ad eos pacem a se datam pervenire de quibus apud nos ratio constiterit quid post commissum egerint. Quæ res cum omnium nostrum consilium et sententiam exspectet, præjudicare ego et soli mihi rem communem vindicare non audeo. Et ideo instetur interim epistolis quas ad vos proxime feceram, quarum exemplum collegis quoque multis jam misi; qui rescripserunt placere sibi quod statuimus, nec ab eo recedendum esse donec, pace nobis a Domino reddita, in unum convenire et singulorum causas examinare possimus.

[*Cases of persons lapsed who subsequently confessed Christ and suffered exile.*]

**Caldonius**, bishop of an unknown African see.

(Cyprian) *Ep.* xviii. (Oxf. xxiv.). [Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 278.]

*Ad Cyprianum.*

Cypriano et compresbyteris Carthagini consistentibus Caldonius, salutem. Necessitas temporum facit ut non temere pacem demus. Sed oportebat vobis scribere, quoniam ii, qui posteaquam sacrificaverunt, iterato tenti, extorres sunt facti. Videntur ergo mihi abluisse prius delictum dum possessiones et domos dimittunt, et pœnitentiam agentes Christum sequuntur. Ergo Felix, qui presbyterium subministrabat sub Decimo, proximus mihi vinculis (plenius cognovi eundem Felicem), Victoria conjux ejus et Lucius fideles extorres facti reliquerunt possessiones, quas nunc fiscus tenet.

**Caldonius.**[*Case of Bona who sacrificed unwillingly.*][Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 279.]

Sed et mulier, nomine Bona, quæ tracta est a marito ad sacrificandum, quæ conscientia non commissi, sed quia tenentes manus ejus ipsi sacrificaverunt cœpit dicere contra, Non feci, vos fecistis; sic et ipsa extorris facta est. Cum ergo universi pacem peterent dicentes: Recuperavimus fidem quam amiseramus, pœnitentiam agentes, et Christum publicè sumus confessi; quamvis mihi videantur debere pacem accipere, tamen ad consilium vestrum eos dimisi, ne videar aliquid temere præsumere. Si quid ergo ex communi consilio placuerit, scribite mihi.

[*The turbulence of the demands of the lapsed.*]**S. Cyprian.***Ep.* xxii. (*Oxf.* xxvii.).[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 291.]*Ad presbyteros et diacones Romæ consistentes.*

3. Namque in provincia nostra per aliquot civitates in præpositos impetus per multitudinem factus est, et pacem, quam semel cuncti a martyribus et confessoribus datam clamitabant, confestim sibi repræsentari coegerunt territis et subactis præpositis suis, qui ad resistendum minus virtute animi et robore fidei prævalebant. Apud nos etiam quidem turbulenti, qui vix a nobis in præteritum regebantur, et in nostram præsentiam differebantur, per hanc epistolam velut quibusdam facibus accensi, plus exardescere et pacem sibi datam extorquere cœperunt.

[*Cyprian decides that the lapsed who have confessed later have restored to themselves peace, which should be accorded them. He wishes that the other lapsed would do the same.*]

*Ep.* xix. (*Oxf.* xxv.).[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 280.]*Respondet Caldonio.*

Recte autem sensisti circa impertiendam fratribus nostris pacem, quam sibi ipsi vera pœnitentia et Dominicæ confessionis gloria reddiderunt, sermonibus suis justificati, quibus se ante damnaverat. Cum ergo abluerint omne delictum, et maculam pristinam assistente sibi Domino potiore virtute deleverint, jacere ultra sub diabolo quasi prostrati non debent, qui extorres facti et bonis suis omnibus spoliati, erexerunt se et cum Christo stare cœperunt. Atque utinam sic et cæteri post lapsum pœnitentes in statum pristinum reformatur! quos nunc urgentes et pacem temere atque importune extorquentes quomodo disposuerimus ut scires, librum tibi cum epistolis numero quinque misi.



[Lucian announces that all the martyrs suffering with him have agreed to grant peace to all.]

**Lucianus**, an African confessor.

(Cyprian) *Ep.* xxi. (Oxf. xxii.). [Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 287.]

*Ad Celerinum.*

Scire debuisti quid circa nos actum sit. Cum benedictus martyr Paulus adhuc in corpore esset, vocavit me, et dixit mihi : Luciane, coram Christo tibi dico ut, si quis post arcessionem pacem abs te pacem petierit, da in nomine meo ; sed et omnes quos minus in tanta tribulatione arcessire dignatus est, universi ceteras ex compacto universis pacem dimisimus.

[Lucian gives the names of the confessors who are joined with him in granting peace to Numeria and Candida.]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 288.]

Et ideo, frater charissime, saluta Numeriam et Candidam, quæ secundum Pauli præceptum et cæterorum martyrum, quorum nomina subjicio, Bassi in pejerario, Mappalici in quæstione, Fortunianis in carcere, Pauli a quæstione, Fortunatæ, Victorini, Vicentis, Herennii, Credulæ, Herenæ, Donati, Firmi, Venusti, Fructi, Marcæ, Martialis et Aristonis, qui Deo volente in carcere famulati sunt, quorum et nos socios futuros intra dies audietis.

[The lapsed are reminded that the power of the keys rests with the Church. The lapsed are not the Church.]

**S. Cyprian.**

*Ep.* xxvii. (Oxf. xxxiii.). [Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 306.]

*Cyprianus lapsis.*

Inde per temporum et successionum vices episcoporum ordinatio Ecclesiæ ratio decurrit, ut Ecclesia super episcopos constitua- tur et omnis actus Ecclesiæ per eosdem præpositos gubernetur. Cum hoc itaque divina lege fundatum sit, miror quosdam audaci meritate sic mihi scribere voluisse, ut Ecclesiæ nomine litteras haberent, “quando Ecclesia in episcopo et clero et in omnibus membris sit constituta.” Absit enim nec Domini misericordia potestas ejus invicta patiatur ut Ecclesia esse dicatur lapsorum numerus, cum scriptum sit : *Deus non est mortuorum sed vivorum.*

[Cyprian praises the clergy for having rejected from communion Cyprianus of Didda, a presbyter, and his deacon, who rashly communicated with the lapsed.]

*Ep.* xxviii. (Oxf. xxxiv.). [Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 308.]

*Ad presbyteros et diacones.*

1. Cyprianus presbyteris et diaconibus fratribus salutem. Integre cum disciplina fecistis, fratres charissimi, quod, consilio col-

**S. Cyprian.**

legarum meorum qui præsentes erant, Gaio Diddensi presbytero et diacono ejus censuistis non communicandum, qui communicando cum lapsis et offerendo oblationes eorum, in pravis erroribus suis frequenter deprehensi, et semel atque iterum secundum quod mihi scripsistis, a collegis meis moniti ne hoc facerent, in præsumptione et audacia sua pertinaciter perstiterunt, decipientes quosdam fratres ex plebe nostra. . . .

[*Clergy communicating with the lapsed are to be expelled from communion pending a council.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 309.]

3. Interea, si quis immoderatus et præceps, sive de nostris presbyteris vel diaconibus, sive de peregrinis, ausus fuerit ante sententiam nostram communicare cum lapsis, a communicatione nostra arceatur, apud omnes nos causam dicturus temeritatis suæ quando in unum, permittente Domino, convenerimus.

[*Informs the Roman clergy of the temerity of the lapsed.*]

*Ep. xxix. (Oxf. xxxv.).*

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 310.]

*Ad presbyteros et diacones Romæ consistentes.*

Nam posteaquam ad vos litteras feci, quas misi per Saturum lectorem et Optatum hypodiaconum quorumdam lapsorum conspirata temeritas, qui poenitentiam agere et Deo satisfacere detrectant, litteras ad me fecerunt, pacem non dandam sibi postulantes, sed quasi jam datam sibi vindicantes, quod dicant Paulum omnibus pacem dedisse, sicut in litteris eorum, quarum exemplum ad vos transmissi, legetis, simulque quid ego eis breviter interim rescripserim; sed et quales postea ad clerum litteras fecerim ut scire possetis, hujus quoque rei exemplum vobis misi. Quod si ultra temeritas eorum nec vestris litteris compressa fuerit, nec consiliis salubribus obtemperaverit, agemus ea quæ secundum Evangelium Dominus agere præcepit.

[*The martyrs, by sending the lapsed to the bishops, acknowledge that the authority to reconcile rests with the bishops.*]

**The Roman Clergy (A.D. 250).**

(Cyprian) *Ep. xxx. (Oxf. xxxvi.).*

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 313.]

*Presbyteri et diaconi Romæ consistentes ad Cyprianum.*

Sed, ut intelligimus, imo, ut res ipsa loquitur et clamat, sanctissimi martyres utrobique adhibendum putaverunt temperamentum et pudoris et veritatis. Nam quia a multis urgebantur, dum ad episcopum illos remittunt, verecundiæ propriæ, ne ulterius inquietarentur, consulendum putaverunt; et dum illis non ipsi communicant, evangelicæ legis illibatam sinceritatem custodiendam judicaverunt.



**The Roman Clergy.**

[*The importance of maintaining the ancient discipline.*]

(Cyprian) *Ep.* xxxi. (Oxf. xxx.). [Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 316.]

*Ad Cyprianum.*

Quid enim magis aut in pace tam aptum aut in bello persecutionis tam necessarium quam debitam severitatem divini vigoris tenere? quam qui remiserit, instabili rerum cursu erret semper necesse est, et huc atque illuc variis et incertis negotiorum tempestatibus dissipetur, et quasi extorto de manibus consiliorum gubernaculo, navim ecclesiasticæ salutis illidat in scopulos; ut appareat non aliter saluti ecclesiasticæ consuli posse nisi si qui et contra ipsam faciunt, quasi quidam adversi fluctus repellantur, et disciplinæ ipsius semper custodita ratio quasi salutare aliquod gubernaculum in tempestate servetur. Nec hoc nobis nunc nuper consilium cogitatum est, nec hæc apud nos adversus improbos modo supervenerunt repentina subsidia; sed antiqua hæc apud nos severitas, antiqua fides, disciplina legitur antiqua: quoniam nec tantas de nobis laudes Apostolus protulisset dicendo: *Quia fides vestra prædicatur in toto mundo*, nisi jam exinde vigor iste radices fidei de temporibus illis mutuatus fuisset; quarum laudum et gloriæ degenerem fuisse maximum crimen est.

[*The perils of too great indulgence.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 318.]

Absit enim ab Ecclesia Romana vigorem suum tam profana facilitate dimittere et nervos severitatis eversa fidei majestate dissolvere; ut, cum adhuc non tantum jaceant, sed et cadant eversorum fratrum ruinæ, properata nimis remedia communicationem utique non profutura præstentur, et nova per misericordiam falsam vulnera veteribus transgressionis vulneribus imprimantur, ut miseris ad eversionem majorem eripiat et pœnitentia.

[*The confessors in prison at Rome revoke their lawless petitions.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 318.]

Quanquam confessorum quoque quos hic adhuc in carcerem dignitas suæ confessionis inclusit, et ad certamen evangelicum sua fides in confessione jam gloriosa semel coronavit, litteras habeas conspirantes cum litteris nostris, quibus severitatem evangelicæ disciplinæ protulerunt, et illicitas petitiones ab Ecclesiæ pudore revocarunt.

[*The prevalence of apostasy, and necessity for corresponding discipline.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 320.]

Aspice totum orbem pene vastatum et ubique jacere dejectorum reliquias et ruinas et idcirco tam grande expeti consilium quam

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late propagatum videtur esse delictum. Non sit minor medicina quam vulnus, non sint minora remedia quam funera, ut quomodo qui ruerunt ob hoc ruerunt quod cæca temeritate nimis incauti fuerunt, ita qui hoc disponere nituntur, omni, consiliorum modamine utantur ne quid non ut oportet factum tanquam irritum ab omnibus judicetur.

[*Let the faithful pray for the lapsed; and let the lapsed do penance.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 321.]

Oremus pro lapsis ut erigantur, oremus pro stantibus ut non ad ruinas usque tententur, oremus ut qui cecidisse referuntur, delicti sui magnitudinem agnoscentes, intelligant non momentaneam neque præproperam desiderare medicinam. . . .

Pulsent sane fores, sed non utique confringant: adeant ad limen Ecclesiæ, sed non utique transilient; castrorum cœlestium excubent portis, sed armati modestia, qua intelligant se desertores fuisse.

[*Some tempered assistance should be rendered to the penitent lapsed on the approach of death, God knowing what He will do with them.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 322.]

Cujus temperamenti moderamen nos hic tenere quærentes diu, et quidem multi, et quidem cum quibusdam episcopis vicinis nobis et appropinquantibus, et quos ex aliis provinciis longe positis persecutionis istius ardor ejecerat, ante constitutionem episcopi nihil innovandum putavimus, sed lapsorum curam mediocriter temperandam esse credimus: ut interim, dum episcopus dari a Deo nobis sustinetur, in suspenso eorum qui moras possunt dilationis sustinere causa teneatur, eorum autem quorum vitæ suæ finem urgens exitus dilationem non potest ferre, acta pœnitentia et professa frequenter suorum detestatione factorum, si lacrymis, si gemitibus, si fletibus dolentis ac vere pœnitentis animi signa prodiderint, cum spes vivendi secundum hominem nulla substiterit, ita demum caute et sollicite subveniri, Deo ipso sciente quid de talibus faciat et qualiter judicii sui examinet pondera, nobis tamen anxie curantibus ut nec pronam nostram improbi homines laudent facilitatem, nec vere pœnitentes accusent nostram quasi duram crudelitatem.

[*The faction of Felicissimus disregard the agreement to do nothing about the lapsed without consultation.*]

**S. Cyprian.**

*Ep.* xl. (Oxf. xliii.).

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 343.]

*Ad plebem.*

3. Cumque semel placuerit tam nobis quam confessoribus et clericis urbicis, item universis episcopis vel in nostra provincia



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vel trans mare constitutis ut nihil innovetur circa lapsorum causam, nisi omnes in unum convenerimus, et, collatis consiliis, cum disciplina pariter et misericordia temperatam sententiam fixerimus, contra hoc consilium nostrum rebelletur, et omnis sacerdotalis auctoritas et potestas factiosis conspiracybus destruat.

[*The circular letter of the Roman clergy (Ep. xxxi.) was written by Novatian and subscribed by Moyses.*]

Ep. lii. (Oxf. iv.).

Migne, *P. L.*, III. 791.]

*Ad Antonianum.*

5. Additum est, etiam Novatiano tunc scribente, et quod scripserat sua voce recitante, et presbytero Moyse tunc adhuc confessore, nunc jam martyre, subscribente ut lapsis infirmis et in exitu constitutis pax daretur. Quæ litteræ per totum mundum missæ sunt, et in notitiam ecclesiis omnibus et universis fratribus perlatae sunt.

[*The first Council of Carthage under Cyprian A.D. 251. It takes a middle course. The Council of Rome A.D. 251 concurs.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, III. 791.]

6. Secundum quod tamen ante fuerat destinatum, persecutione sopita, cum data esset facultas conveniendi, copiosus episcoporum numerus, quos integros et incolumes fides sua et Domini tutela protexit, in unum convenimus, et scripturis diu ex utraque parte prolatis, temperamentum salubri moderatione libravimus, ut nec in totum spes communicationis et pacis lapsis denegaretur; ne plus desperatione deficerent, et eo quod sibi Ecclesia eluderetur, secuti sæculum gentiliter viverent: nec tamen rursus censura Evangelica solveretur, ut ad communicationem temere prosilirent, sed traheretur diu pœnitentia, et rogaretur dolenter paterna clementia, et examinarentur causæ et voluntates et necessitates singulorum, secundum quod libello continetur, quem ad te pervenisse confido, ubi singula placitorum capita conscripta sunt. Ac si minus sufficiens episcoporum in Africa numerus videbatur, etiam Romam super hac re scripsimus ad Cornelium collegam nostrum: qui et ipse cum plurimis coepiscopis habito concilio, in eandem nobiscum sententiam pari gravitate et salubri moderatione consensit.

[*If one reconciled when in peril of death recover, no blame to the clergy. Libellatici not to be held equally worthy of blame with sacrificati.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, III. 804.]

13. Si qui enim in infirmitatibus occupantur, illis, sicut placuit, in periculo subvenitur. Postea tamen quam subventum est, et

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periclitantibus pax data est offocari a nobis non possunt aut opprimi, aut vi et manu nostra in exitum mortis urgeri, ut quoniam morientibus pax datur, necesse sit mori eos qui acceperint pacem, cum magis in hoc indicium divinæ pietatis et paternæ lenitatis appareat quod qui pignus vitæ in data pace percipiunt, hic quoque ad vitam percepta pace teneantur. Et, idcirco si, accepta pace, commeatus a Deo datur, nemo hoc debet in sacerdotibus criminari, cum semel placuerit fratribus in periculo subveniri. Nec tu existimes, frater charissime, sicut quibusdam videtur, libellaticos cum sacrificatis æquari oportere, quando inter ipsos etiam qui sacrificaverunt et conditio frequenter et causa diversa sit. Neque enim æquandi sunt, ille qui ad sacrificium nefandum statim voluntate prosilivit, et qui luctatus et congressus diu ad hoc funestum opus necessitate pervenit, ille qui et se et omnes suos prodidit, et qui ipse pro cunctis ad discrimen accedens uxorem et liberos et domum totam periculi sui perfunctione protexit, ille qui inquilinos vel amicos suos ad facinus compulit, et qui inquilinis et colonis pepercit, fratres etiam plurimos, qui extorres et profugi recedebant in sua tecta et hospitia recepit, ostendens et offerens Domino multas animas viventes et incolumes quæ pro una saucia deprecentur.

[Libellatici *not to be ranked with* sacrificati.]

[Migne, *P. L.*, III. 805.]

14. Cum ergo inter ipsos qui sacrificaverunt multa sit diversitas, quæ inclementia est et quam acerba duritia libellaticos cum iis qui sacrificaverunt jungere, quando is cui libellus acceptus est dicat: Ego prius legeram, et episcopo tractante cognoveram non sacrificandum idolis, nec simulacra servum Dei adorare debere; et idcirco, ne hoc facerem quod non licebat, cum occasio libelli fuisset oblata, quem nec ipsum acciperem nisi ostensa fuisset occasio, ad magistratum vel veni, vel alio eunte mandavi, Christianum me esse, sacrificare mihi non licere, ad aras diaboli me venire non posse, dare me ob hoc præmium, ne quod non licet faciam. Nunc tamen etiam iste qui libello maculatus est, postea quam nobis admonentibus didicit nec hoc se facere debuisse, etsi manus pura sit, et os ejus feralis cibi contagia nulla polluerint, conscientiam tamen ejus esse pollutam, flet auditis nobis et lamentatur, et quod deliquerit nunc admonetur, et non tam crimine quam errore deceptus, quod jam de cætero instructus et paratus sit, contestatur.

[*We do not prejudge the judgment of the Lord, save on condition of true penitence.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, III. 808.]

18. Neque enim præjudicamus Domino judicaturus quo minus si poenitentiam plenam et justam peccatoris invenerit, tunc ratum



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faciat quod a nobis fuerit hic statutum. Si vero nos aliquis pœnitentiæ simulatione deluserit, Deus, qui non deridetur, et qui cor hominis intuetur, de his quæ nos minus perspeximus iudicet et servorum suorum sententiam Dominus emendet; dum tamen nos meminisse, frater charissime, debeamus scriptum esse *Frater fratrem adjuvans exaltabitur . . .*

[*The analogy of the reconciled adulterer shows that no serious evil need follow the reconciliation of the lapsed.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, III. 810.]

20. Nam et mœchis a nobis pœnitentiæ tempus conceditur et pax datur. Non tamen idcirco virginitas in Ecclesia deficit, aut continentiae propositum gloriosum per aliena peccata languescit. Floret Ecclesia tot virginibus coronata, et castitas ac pudicitia tenorem gloriæ suæ servat, nec quia adultero pœnitentia et venia laxatur, continentiae vigor frangitur.

[*Bishops who did not reconcile adulterers did not break off communion with the rest : so let it be now.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, III. 811.]

21. Et quidem apud antecessores nostros quidam de episcopis istic in provincia nostra dandam pacem mœchis non putaverunt, et in totum pœnitentiæ locum contra adulteria clausurunt. Non tamen a coepiscoporum suorum collegio recesserunt, aut catholicæ ecclesiæ unitatem vel duritiæ vel censuræ suæ obstinatione rupe-  
runt, ut quia apud alios adulteris pax dabatur, qui non dabat de ecclesia separaretur. Manente concordiae vinculo et perseverante catholicæ ecclesiæ individuo sacramento, actum suum disponit et unusquisque episcopus rationem propositi sui Domino redditurus.

[*At the approach of death the lapsed who have not done penance before are not to be reconciled.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, III. 814.]

23. Et idcirco, frater charissime, pœnitentiam non agentes nec dolorem delictorum suorum toto corde et manifesta lamentationis suæ professione testantes, prohibendos omnino censuimus a spe communicationis et pacis, si in infirmitate atque in periculo cœperint deprecari; quia rogare illos non delicti pœnitentia, sed mortis urgentis admonitio compellit, nec dignus est in morte accipere solatium qui se non cogitavit esse moriturum.

[*A libellatic less culpable than an adulterer. Yet Novatian still suffers these.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, III. 816.]

26. Aut si se cordis et renis scrutatorem constituit et iudicem, per omnia æqualiter iudicet, et cum sciat scriptum esse: *Ecce*

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*sanus factus es, jam noli peccare, ne quid tibi deterius fiat, fraudatores et mœchos a latere atque a comitatu suo separet quando multo et gravior et pejor sit mœchi quam libellatici causa, cum hic necessitate, ille voluntate peccaverit, hic existimans sibi satis esse quod non sacrificaverit, errore deceptus sit, ille matrimonii expugnator alieni, vel lupanar ingressus ad cloacam et cœnosam voraginem vulgi, sanctificatum corpus et Dei templum detestabili colluvione violaverit.*

*[The futility of the procedure of Novatian, who exhorts to penance, but gives no hope of reconciliation.]*

28. Atque o frustrandæ fraternitatis irrisio! o miserorum lamentantium et amentium caduca deceptio! o hæreticæ institutionis inefficax et vana traditio! hortari ad satisfactionis pœnitentiam et subtrahere de satisfactione medicinam, dicere fratribus nostris; “Plange et lacrymas funde, et diebus ac noctibus ingemisce, et pro abluendo et purgando delicto tuo largiter et frequenter operare, sed extra ecclesiam post omnia ista morieris; quæcunque ad pacem pertinent facies, sed nullam pacem, quam quæris, accipies.” Quis non statim pereat, quis non ipsa desperatione deficiat, quis non animum suum a proposito lamentationis avertat?

*[Penitence itself is barred by the withholding of its fruit.]*

29. Præcludere est atque abscindere iter doloris ac pœnitendi viam, ut cum in scripturis omnibus Dominus Deus revertentibus ad se et pœnitentibus blandiatur, nostra duritia et crudelitate, dum fructus pœnitentiæ intercipitur, pœnitentia ipsa tollatur. Quod si invenimus a pœnitentia agenda neminem debere prohiberi, et deprecantibus atque exorantibus Domini misericordiam, secundum quod ille misericors et pius est, per sacerdotes ejus pacem posse concedi, admittendus est plangentium gemitus, et pœnitentiæ fructus dolentibus non negandus.

*[Now, on the approach of persecution, peace to be granted to the lapsed who have repented.]*

(2nd Council of Carthage under Cyprian, A.D. 252.)

*Ep. liv. (Oxf. lvii.).* [Migne, *P. L.*, III. 880; Mansi, I. 867.]

*Epistola synodica S. Cypriani, Carthaginensis episcopi, et collegarum ad S. Cornelium papam de lapsis.*

Statueramus quidem jampridem, frater carissime, participato invicem nobiscum consilio, ut qui in persecutionis infestatione supplantati ab adversario, vel lapsi fuissent, ac sacrificiis se illicitis maculassent, agerent diu pœnitentiam plenam: et si periculum infirmitas urgeret, pacem sub ictu mortis acciperent. Nec enim fas erat, aut permittebat paterna pietas et divina clementia,



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ecclesiam pulsantibus claudi, et dolentibus et deprecantibus spei salutaris subsidium denegari, ut de sæculo recedentes, sine communicatione et pace domini dimitterentur; quando permiserit ipse, qui legem dedit, ut ligata in terris, etiam in cœlis ligata essent: solvi autem possent illic, quæ hic prius in ecclesia solverentur.

Sed enim cum videamus diem rursus alterius infestationis appropinquare cœpisse, et crebris atque assiduis ostensionibus admoneamur, ut ad certamen quod nobis hostis indicit, armati et parati simus; plebem etiam nobis de divina dignatione commissam exhortationibus nostris paremus, et omnes omnino milites Christi, qui arma desiderant, et prælium flagitant, intra castra Dominica colligamus: necessitate cogente censuimus, eis qui de Ecclesia Domini non recesserunt, et pœnitentiam agere et lamentari ac Dominum deprecari a primo lapsus sui die non destiterunt, pacem dandam esse; et eos ad prælium, quod imminet, armari et instrui oportere.

2. Obtemperandum est namque ostensionibus atque admonitionibus justis, ut a pastoribus oves in periculo non deserantur; sed grex omnis in unum congregetur, et exercitus Domini ad certamen militiæ cœlestis armetur. Merito enim trahebatur dolentium pœnitentia tempore longiore, ut infirmis in exitu subveniretur, quandiu quies et tranquillitas aderat, quæ differre diu plangentium lacrymas, et subvenire sero morientibus in infirmitate pateretur. At vero nunc non infirmis, sed fortibus pax necessaria est: nec morientibus, sed viventibus communicatio a nobis danda est: ut quos excitamus et hortamur ad prælium, non inermes et nudos relinquamus, sed protectione sanguinis et corporis Christi muniamus: et cum ad hoc fiat Eucharistia, ut possit accipientibus esse tutela, quos tutos esse contra adversarium volumus, munimento Dominicæ saturitatis armemus. Nam quomodo docemus aut provocamus eos in confessione nominis sanguinem suum fundere, si eis militaturis Christi sanguinem denegamus? aut quomodo ad martyrii poculum idoneos facimus, si non eos prius ad bibendum in Ecclesia poculum Domini jure communicationis admittimus.

*[It befits the conscience of a bishop that none should perish by being driven out of the Church by his fault.]*

*Ep. lv. (Oxf. lix.).*

*[Migne, P. L., III. 833.]*

*Ad S. Cornelium papam.*

8. Quod ad nos attinet, conscientiæ nostræ convenit, frater charissime, dare operam, ne quis culpa nostra de Ecclesia pereat. Si autem quis ultro et crimine suo perierit, et pœnitentiam agere atque ad Ecclesiam redire noluerit, nos in die iudicii inculpatos futuros, qui consulimus sanitati, illos in pœnis remansuros, qui noluerint consilii nostri salubritate sanari.

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[*Some so unworthy that they cannot be reconciled without risk to the flock.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, III. 849.]

15. Quibusdam enim aut crimina sua ita obsistunt, aut fratus obstinate et firmiter renituntur, ut recipi omnino non possint, cum scandalo et periculo plurimorum. Neque enim sic putamina quædam colligenda sunt, ut quæ integra et sana sunt vulnerentur, nec utilis aut consultus est Pastor qui ita morbidas et contactas oves gregi admiscet, ut gregem totum mali cohærentis afflictatione contamine.

[*The glorious Roman confession (under Gallus, A.D. 252) in which many lapsed persons took part.*]

*Ep. lvii (Oxf. lv.).*

[Migne, *P. L.*, III. 858.]

*Ad S. Cornelium papam.*

Quale illud fuit sub oculis Dei spectaculum gloriosum? quale in conspectu Christi, ejus Ecclesiæ suæ gaudium, ad pugnam quam tentaverat hostis inferre, non singulos milites, sed tota simul castra prodisse. Omnes enim constat venturos fuisse, si audire potuissent; quando accurrerit properanter et venerit, quisquis audivit. Quot illic lapsi gloriosa confessione sunt restituti? Steterunt fortes, et ipso dolore pœnitentia facti ad prælium fortiores; ut appareat nuper subitatos esse, et novæ atque insuetæ rei pavore trepidasse; rediisse ad se postmodum fidem veram, et vires suas de Dei timore collectas ad omnem patientiam constanter et firmiter roborasse, nec jam stare ad criminis veniam, sed ad passionis coronam.

[*Marcianus holds the "heretical presumption" of Novatian, and has departed from the unity of the Catholic Church.*]

*Ep. lxvii. (A.D. 254. Genuineness doubted. Oxf. lxviii.).*

*Ad Stephanum papam.*

*Cyprianus Stephano fratri salutem,*

Faustinus collega noster, Lugduni consistens, frater charissime, semel atque iterum mihi scripsit, significans ea, quæ etiam vobis scio utique nuntiata, tam ab eo quam a cæteris coepiscopis nostris in eadem provincia constitutis, quod Marcianus Arelate consistens Novatiano se conjunxerit, et a catholicæ Ecclesiæ unitate atque a corporis nostri et sacerdotum consensione discesserit, tenens hæreticæ præsumptionis durissimam pravitatem: ut servis Dei pœnitentibus et dolentibus, et Ecclesiam lacrymis et gemitu et dolore pulsantibus, divinæ pietatis et lenitatis paternæ solatia et subsidia claudantur, nec ad fovenda vulnera admittantur vulnerati, sed sine spe pacis et communicationis relictæ ad luporum rapinam et prædam diaboli projiciantur. Cui rei nostrum est



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consulere et subvenire, frater charissime, qui divinam clementiam cogitantes, et gubernandæ Ecclesiæ libram tenentes, sic censuram vigoris peccatoribus exhibemus, ut tamen lapsis erigendis, et curandis vulneratis, bonitatis et misericordiæ divinæ medicinam non denegemus.

[*Let Marcianus be deposed, and another substituted.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, III. 1028.]

Quam vanum est, frater charissime, ut Novatiano nuper retuso et refutato, et per totum orbem a sacerdotibus Deo abstento, nunc adulatores adhuc nobis patiamur illudere et de majestate et dignitate Ecclesiæ judicare. Dirigantur in provinciam et ad plebem Arelate consistentem a te litteræ, quibus abstento Marciano alius in locum ejus substituatur, et grex Christi, qui in hodiernum ab illo dissipatus et vulneratus contemnitur, colligatur.

[*Lapsed bishops may be admitted to penance, but may not preside over the Church, or offer sacrifices to God.*]

*Ep. lxxviii.* (Fourth Council of Carthage under Cyprian, A.D. 254. Oxf. lxxvii.).

[Migne, *P. L.*, III. 1065.]

*Cyprianus, Cæcilius, Primus et alii ad clerum et plebes in Hispania consistentes.*

Quapropter cum, sicut scripsistis, fratres dilectissimi et ut Felix et Sabinus collegæ nostri asseverant, utque alius Felix de Cæsar-augusta fidei cultor ac defensor veritatis litteris suis significat, Basilides et Martialis nefando idololatriæ libello contaminati sint, Basilides adhuc insuper, præter libelli maculam, cum in infirmitate decumberet, in Deum blasphemaverit et se blasphemasse confessus sit, et episcopatum pro conscientia suæ vulnere sponte deponens ad agendam pœnitentiam conversus sit, Deum deprecans, et satis gratulans si sibi vel laico communicare contingeret. Martialis quoque præter gentilium turpia et lutulenta convivium in collegio diu frequentata et filios in eodem collegio exterarum gentium more apud profana sepulcra depositos et alienigenio consepultos, actis etiam publice habitis apud procuratorem ducenarium obtemperasse se idololatriæ, et Christum negasse contestatus sit, cumque alia multa sint, et gravia delicta quibus Basilides et Martialis implicati tenentur frustra tales episcopatum sibi usurpare conantur, cum manifestum sit ejusmodi homines nec Ecclesiæ Christi posse præesse nec Deo sacrificia offerre debere; maxime cum jampridem nobiscum et cum omnibus omnino episcopis in toto mundo constitutis etiam Cornelius collega noster sacerdos pacificus ac justus, et martyrio quoque dignatione Domini honoratus, decreverit ejusmodi homines ad pœnitentiam quidem agendam posse admitti, ab ordinatione autem cleri atque sacerdotali honore prohiberi.

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[*Causes of the wide apostasy in Africa in the Decian persecution.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 482.]

*De Lapsis.*

6. Studebant augendo patrimonio singuli, et, obliti quid credentes aut sub apostolis ante fecissent aut semper facere deberent, insatiabili cupiditatis ardore ampliandis facultatibus incubabant. Non in sacerdotibus religio devota, non in ministris fides integra, non in operibus misericordia, non in moribus disciplina. Corrupta barba in viris, in feminis forma fucata, adulterati post Dei manus oculi, capilli mendacio colorati. Ad decipienda corda simplicium callidæ fraudes, circumveniendis fratribus subdolæ voluntates. Jungere cum infidelibus vinculum matrimonii, prostituere gentilibus membra Christi. Non jurare tantum temere, sed adhuc etiam pejerare: præpositos superbo tumore contemnere; venenato sibi ore maledicere, odiis pertinacibus invicem dissidere. Episcopi plurimi, quos et hortamento esse oportet cæteris et exemplo, divina procuratione contempta, procuratores rerum sæcularium fieri, derelicta cathedra, plebe deserta, per alienas provincias oberrantes, negotiationis quæstuosæ nundinas aucupari, esurientibus in ecclesia fratribus habere largiter velle, fundos insidiosis fraudibus rapere, usuris multiplicantibus fenus augere.

[*The majority of the brethren lapsed voluntarily.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 485.]

7. Ad prima statim verba minantis inimici maximus fratrum numerus fidem suam prodidit; nec prostratus est persecutionis impetu, sed voluntario lapsu se ipse prostravit. Quid oro inauditum, quid novum venerat, ut, velut incognitis atque inopinatis rebus exortis, Christi sacramentum temeritate præcipiti solveretur?

[*Of these some abjured even with eagerness.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 486.]

8. Exciderunt quibusdam, proh nefas! omnia et de memoria recesserunt. Non exspectaverunt saltem ut ascenderent apprehensi, ut interrogati negarent. Ante aciem multi victi, sine congressione prostrati; nec hoc sibi reliquerunt, ut sacrificare idolis viderentur inviti. Ultro ad forum currere, ad mortem sponte properare, quasi hoc olim cuperent, quasi amplecterentur occasionem datam quam semper optassent. Quot illic a magistratibus vespera urgente dilati sunt? quot, ne eorum differretur interitus, etiam rogaverunt? Quam vim potest talis obtendere, qua crimen suum purget, cum vim magis ipse fecerit ut periret?

[*Two lapsed who subsequently confessed Christ.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 490.]

13. Sic hic Casto et Æmilio aliquando Dominus ignovit; sic, in prima congressione devictos, victores in secundo prælio reddidit,



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ut fortiores ignibus fierent qui ignibus ante cessissent, et unde superati essent, inde superarent.

[*The priest of God must supply salutary remedies.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 491.]

14. Sic oportet et Dei sacerdotem non obsequiis decipientibus fallere, sed remediis salutaribus providere. Imperitus est medicus qui tumentes vulnerum sinus manu parcente contrectat et in altis recessibus viscerum virus inclusum dum servat exaggerat. Aperendum vulnus est et secandum, et, putraminibus amputatis, medela fortiore curandum. Vociferetur et clamet licet et conqueratur æger impatiens per dolorem, gratias aget postmodum cum senserit sanitatem.

[*The false peace of those who after lapse are readily re-admitted to communion.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 492.]

15. Operiuntur morientium vulnera, et plaga lethalis altis et profundis visceribus infixæ, dissimulato dolore, contegitur. A diaboli aris revertentes, ad sanctum Domini sordidis et infectis nidore manibus accedunt. Mortiferos idolorum cibos adhuc pene ructantes, exhalantibus etiam nunc scelus suum faucibus et contagia funesta redolentibus, Domini corpus invadunt. . . .

[*Such communion a greater sin than the denial.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 493.]

16. Spretis his omnibus atque contemptis, ante expiata delicta, ante exomologesim factam criminis, ante purgatam conscientiam sacrificio et manu sacerdotis, ante offensam placatam indignantis Domini et minantis, vis infertur corpori et sanguini, et plus modo in Dominum manibus atque ore delinquunt, quam cum Dominum negaverunt.

[*Such facility hinders from salvation.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 493.]

16. Pacem putant esse quam quidam verbis fallacibus venditant. Non est pax illa, sed bellum; nec Ecclesiæ jungitur qui ab Evangelio separatur. Quid injuriam beneficium vocant? quid impietatem vocabulo pietatis appellant? Quid eis qui flere jugiter et rogare Dominum suum debent, intercepta pœnitentiæ lamentatione, communicare se simulant? Hoc sunt ejusmodi lapsis quod grando frugibus, quod turbidum sidus arboribus, quod armentis pestilens vastitas, quod navigiis sæva tempestas. Solatium æternæ spei adimunt, arborem a radice subvertunt, sermone morbido ad lethale contagium serpunt, navem scopulis, ne in portum perveniat,

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illidunt. Non concedit pacem facilitas ista, sed tollit, nec communicationem tribuit, sed impedit ad salutem. Persecutio est hæc alia, et alia tentatio, per quam subtilis inimicus impugnandis adhuc lapsis occulta populatione grassatur, ut lamentatio conquiescat, ut dolor sileat, ut delicti memoria evanescat, ut comprimatur pectorum gemitus, statuatur fletus oculorum, nec Dominum, graviter offensum, longa et plena pœnitentia deprecetur, cum scriptum sit : Memento unde cecideris et age pœnitentiam.

[*Only God, not man, can pardon.*]

[Migne, P. L., IV. 494.]

17. Nemo se fallat, nemo se decipiat. Solus Dominus misereri potest. Veniam peccatis quæ in ipsum commissa sunt, solus potest ille largiri qui peccata nostra portavit, qui pro nobis doluit, quem Deus tradidit pro peccatis nostris. Homo Deo esse non potest major; nec remittere aut donare indulgentia sua servus potest, quod in Dominum delicto graviore commissum est, ne adhuc lapso et hoc accadat ad crimen si nesciat esse prædictum : *Maledictus homo qui spem habet in homine*. Dominus orandus est, Dominus nostra satisfactione placandus est, qui negantem negare se dixit, qui omne iudicium de Patre solus accepit. Credimus quidem posse apud iudicem plurimum martyrum merita et opera justorum : sed cum iudicii dies venerit, cum, port occasum sæculi hujus et mundi, ante tribunal Christi populus ejus astiterit.

[*The rash absolver does not benefit, but hinder. Even the martyrs under the altar have to be patient. Obvious checks to the dispensations of the martyrs on earth.*]

[Migne, P. L., IV. 495.]

18. Cæterum, si quis, præpropera festinatione temerarius remissionem peccatorum dare se cunetis putat posse, aut audet Domini præcepta rescindere, non tantum nihil prodest, sed et obest lapsis. Provocasse est iram, non servasse sententiam, nec misericordiam prius Dei deprecandam putare, sed contempto Domino de sua facultate præsumere. Sub ara Dei animæ occisorum martyrum clamant magna voce dicentes : Quosque, Domine, sanctus et verus, non judicas et vindicas sanguinem nostrum de his qui in terris inhabitant. Et requiescere ac patientiam tenere adhuc jubentur. Et quemquam posse aliquis existimat remittendis passim donandisque peccatis bonum fieri contra iudicem velle, aut prius quam vindicetur ipse alios posse defendere? Mandant martyres aliquid fieri; sed si justa, si licita, si non contra ipsum Dominum a Dei sacerdote facienda, si obtemperantis facilis et prona consensus, si petentis fuerit religiosa moderatio. Mandant aliquid martyres fieri; sed, si scripta non sint in Domini lege quæ mandant, ante est ut sciamus illos de Deo impetrasse quod postulant,



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tunc facere quod mandant. Neque enim statim videri potest de divina majestate concessum, quod fuerit humana pollicitatione promissum.

[*The Lord will deny those who deny Him no less than He will confess those who confess Him.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 497.]

20. Si negantem non negat, nec confitentem confitetur. Non potest Evangelium in parte consistere et in parte nutare : aut utrumque oportet valeat, aut utrumque vim veritatis amittat : si negantes rei criminis non erunt, nec confitentes præmium virtutis accipient. Porro, si fides quæ vicerit coronatur, necesse est ut victa perfidia puniatur. Ita martyres, aut nihil possunt si Evangelium, solvi potest, aut si Evangelium non potest solvi, contra Evangelium facere non possunt qui de Evangelio martyres fiunt.

[*Signal Divine punishments of apostasy.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 498.]

24. Unus ex his qui sponte Capitolium negaturus ascendit, postquam Christum negavit obmutuit. Pœna inde cœpit unde cœpit et crimen ; ut nec rogare jam posset qui verba ad precum misericordiam non haberet. Alia in balneis constituta (hoc enim crimini ejus et malis decrat, ut et ad balneas statim pergeret quæ lavacri vitalis gratiam perdidisset) illic ab immundo spiritu immunda correpta, laniavit dentibus linguam quæ fuerit vel pasta impie vel locuta. Postquam sceleratus cibus sumptus est, in perniciem suam rabies oris armata est. Ipsa sui carnifex exstitit : nec diu superesse postmodum potuit : doloribus ventris et viscerum cruciata, defecit.

[*The exomologesis of those who confessed to the priests that they had contemplated apostasy.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 503.]

28. Denique quanto et fide majores et timore meliores sunt qui quamvis nullo sacrificii aut libelli facinore constricti, quoniam tamen de hoc vel cogitaverunt, hoc ipsum apud sacerdotes Dei dolenter et simpliciter confitentes, exomologesin conscientiæ faciunt, animi sui pondus exponunt, salutarem medelam parvis licet et modicis vulneribus exquirunt, scientes scriptum esse : Deus non deridetur.

[*Advantage of confession, satisfaction, and sacerdotal remission in this present life.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 503.]

29. Confiteantur singuli, quæso vos, fratres dilectissimi, delictum suum, dum adhuc qui deliquit in sæculo est, dum admitti

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confessio ejus potest, dum satisfactio et remissio facta per sacerdotes apud Dominum grata est. Convertamur ad Dominum mente tota; et pœnitentiam criminis veris doloribus exprimentes, Dei misericordiam deprecemur.

[*No penance on the part of some lapsed persons.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 504.]

30. Lamentari eum putamus ex toto corde, jejuniis, fletibus, planctibus Dominum deprecari, qui ex primo criminis die lavacra quotidie cum feminis celebrat, qui epulis affluentibus pastus et sagina largiore distentus, cruditates suas postridie ructat, nec cibos et potus suos cum pauperum necessitate communicat.

[*Exomologesis used of the monody of Daniel.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 505.]

31. Daniel quoque, post fidei atque innocentiae suae multiplicem gratiam, post dignationem Domini circa virtutes ac laudes suas sæpe repetitam, jejuniis adhuc promereri Deum nititur, in sacco et in cinere volutatur, exomologesin faciens dolenter et dicens: *Dominus Deus magnus et fertis et metuendus qui servas testamentum tuum et miserationes eis qui te diligunt, et conservant imperia tua; peccavimus, facinus admisimus, impii fuimus, transgressi sumus, ac deseruimus præcepta tua et judicia tua; non audivimus verba puerorum tuorum Prophetarum quæ locuti sunt in nomine tuo super reges nostros et omnes gentes et super omnem terram. Tibi Domine justitia, nobis autem confusio.*

[*Exomologesis used of the song of the Three Children.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 505.]

31. Ananias, Asarias, Misahel, illustres ac nobiles pueri, quominus exomologesin Deo facerent nec inter flammas et camini exæstantis incendia quieverunt.

[*God can forgive him who repents, works, asks. He can credit to the account of such what the martyrs have asked and the priests have done. Finally, if the lapsed seek again the conflict, he will be found worthy not only of pardon, but of a crown.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 508.]

36. Potest ille indulgentiam dare, sententiam suam potest ille deflectere. Pœnitenti, operanti, roganti potest clementer ignoscere, potest in acceptum referre quidquid pro talibus et petierint martyres et fecerint sacerdotes. Vel si quis plus eum suis satisfactionibus moverit, si ejus iram, si indignantis offensam justa deprecatione placaverit, dat ille et arma rursum quibus victus armetur, reparat et corroborat vires quibus fides instaurata



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vegetetur. Repetet certamen suum miles, iterabit aciem, provocabit hostem, et quidem factus ad prælium fortior per dolorem. Qui sic Deo satisfecerit, qui pœnitentia facti sui, qui pudore delicti, plus et virtutis et fidei de ipso lapsus sui dolore conceperit, exauditus et adjutus a Domino, quam contristaverat nuper, lætam faciet Ecclesiam; nec jam solam Dei veniam merebitur, sed et coronam.

[*Some confessors have fallen into grave sins.*]

*De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, 20.

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 531.]

Neque enim confessio immunem facit ab insidiis diaboli, aut contra tentationes et pericula et incursus atque impetus sæculares adhuc in sæculo positum perpetua securitate defendit. Cæterum numquam in confessoribus fraudes et stupra et adulteria postmodum videremus, quæ nunc in quibusdam videntes ingemiscimus et dolemus.

[*Impossible for him whose offence is against God, to be absolved in the Church.*]

*Testimonia adversus Judæos.*

iii. 28.

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 781.]

*Non posse in Ecclesia remitti ei qui in Deum deliquerit.*

In Evangelio cata Matthæum: *Qui dixerit verbum adversus Filium hominis, remittetur illi. Qui autem dixerit adversus Spiritum sanctum, non remittetur illi, neque in isto sæculo neque in futuro.* Item cata Marcum: *Omnia peccata remittentur filiis hominum et blasphemix. Qui autem blasphemaverit in Spiritum sanctum, non remittetur illi, sed reus erit æterni peccati.* De hoc ipso in Basilion primo: *Si delinquendo peccet vir adversus virum, orabunt pro eo Dominum. Si autem in Deum peccet homo, quis orabit pro eo.*

[*Exomologesis used of confession of sins to God.*]

iii. 114.

[Migne, *P. L.*, IV. 808.]

*Dum in carne est quis, exomologesin facere debere.*

In Psalmo quinto: *Apud inferos autem quis confitebitur tibi.* Item in Psalmo xxix.: *Numquid exomologesin faciet tibi pulvis?* Item alibi exomologesin faciendam: *Malo pœnitentiam peccatoris quam mortem. . . .*

[*The actual libellus of one Aurelius Diogenes, a libellatic.*]

**Libellus I** (*in the Brugsch collection at Berlin. Discovered in the Fayoum, S.W. of Cairo, in 1893. A papyrus leaf about 8 ins. × 3 ins.*).

**Libellus I.**

[Abp. Benson, *Cyprian*, p. 542; Mitteis und Wilcken, *Papyruskunde*, No. 124.]

τοις ἐπὶ τῶν θυσιῶν ἡρη-  
 μένοις κω(μης) ἀλεξ(ανδρου) νησου  
 παρα αὐρηλ(ιου) διογενου(ς) σατα-  
 βουτος ἀπο κω(μης) ἀλεξανδ(ρου)  
 νησου ὡς Λοβ ουλ(η)  
 οφρυι δεξ(ια) καὶ αἰ  
 θυῶν τοις θεοῖς διετε-  
 λεσα καὶ νυν ἐπὶ πα-  
 ρουσιν ὑμῖν κατὰ  
 τὰ προστετατα[γμῆ]  
 να ἐθυσα [κα]ι ἐπ[. . . .]  
 [.]ι τῶν ι[ε]ρειῶν[. . .]  
 σαμην καὶ ἀξίῳ ν[μας]  
 ὑποσημιώσασθαι  
 διευτυχεῖται  
 αὐρηλ[ιος] [δι]ογενῆς ἐπιδ[ε(δωκα)]  
 αὐρη(λῖος) σ . . . . ρ . . . . [ . . . .]  
 θυοντα μυσ[. . . .]  
 . . . . γῶνος σῆσ[ημειῶμαι]  
 [La] αυτοκρατορο[ς] καὶ [σαρος]  
 [γα]ίου μεσσιου κ[ο]ιν[του]  
 [τρ]αι[ανου] [δε]κιου ευσ[εβους]  
 [ε]υτ[υχους] σε[β]α[σ]του  
 ἐπ[ειφ]β

[*Translation of Libellus I.*]

To the commissioners of the sacrifices of the village of Alexander's island from Aurelius Diogenes [son of] Satabûs of the village of Alexander's island. About 72. Scar on right eyebrow. I was both constant in ever sacrificing to the gods, and now in your presence according to the precepts I sacrificed and drank and tasted of the victims, and I beseech you to attach your signature.

May you ever prosper.

I, Aurelius Diogenes, have delivered this.

I, Aurelius . . . [? saw] him sacrificing. I, Mys[thes son of] . . . non, have signed.

[First year] of the Emperor Cæsar.

Gaius Messius Quintus.

Trajanus Decius Pius.

Felix Augustus.

Second day of Epiphi.



**Libellus I.**

(This libellus is a papyrus leaf about 8 inches by 3, much damaged). Round brackets ( ) indicate abbreviations in the original, square brackets [ ] indicate holes in the papyrus. The 2nd Epiphi in the Egyptian kalendar is 26 June [A.D. 250].

[*The actual libellus of Syrus Aurelius and Pasbeius Aurelius and their wives Demetria and Serapias, libellatics.*]

**Libellus II** (*in the collection of the Archduke Rainer*). *Fragments pieced together. Brought from the Fayoum, 1894.*

[See Dr. A. J. Mason in the *Guardian*, March 21, 1894; Abp. Benson, *Cyprian*, p. 542.]

τοῖς ἐπὶ τῶν θυσιῶν ἡρημένοις  
 κωμῆς φιλαδελφίας  
 παρὰ ἀνρηλιῶν σῦρου καὶ πασβείου τοῦ  
 ἀδελφοῦ καὶ δημητρίας καὶ σαραπιάδος  
 γυναικῶν [ῆ]μῶν ἐξωπυλείτων  
 αἰεὶ θύον[τες] τοῖς θεοῖς διετελε  
 σάμεν καὶ νῦν ἐπὶ παρόντων ὑμῶν  
 κατὰ τὰ προσταχθέντα καὶ ἐσπισάμεν  
 καὶ [τῶ]ν ἰ[ερειῶν] ἐ[γευσάμεθα καὶ]  
 [ἀξιούμεν ὑμᾶς ὑποσημειῶ]  
 σασθαι ἡμῖν διευτ[υχείτε]  
 ἀνρηλ᾽ σῦρος καὶ πασβῆς ἐπιδέδωκ\*  
 ἰσιδωρος ἐγρ|υ αὐτ᾽ ἀγρ|

[*Translation of Libellus II.*]

To the commissioners of the sacrifices of the village of Philadelphia from the Aurelii Syrus and Pasbeius his brother and Demetria and Serapias our wives, Dwellers outside the gates. We were constant in ever sacrificing to the gods, and now in your presence according to the precepts we both poured libations and tasted of the victims, and we beseech you to attach your signature for us. May you ever prosper.

We, Aurelius Syrus and Pasbes, have delivered this.

I, Isidorus, wrote for them *as* unlettered.

[*The rigorism of Novatian.*]

**Ad Novatianum.**

[Migne, *P. L.*, IIIA. 1205.]

1. Cogitanti mihi et intolerabiliter animo æstuanti, quidnam agere deberem de miserandis fratribus qui vulnerati non propria voluntate, sed diaboli sævientis irruptione, adhuc usque, hoc est, per longam temporum seriem agentes, pœnas darent; ecce ex

**Ad Novatianum.**

adverso obortus est alius hostis, et ipsius paternæ pietatis adversarius hæreticus Novatianus; qui non tantum ut in Evangelio significatum est sicut sacerdos vel levites jacentem vulneratum præteriret, sed ingeniosa et nova crudelitate sauciatum potius occideret: adimendo spem salutis, denegando misericordiam patris, respuendo pœnitentiam fratris.

[*Some of those who had lapsed in the Decian persecution conquered in a second contest.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IIIA. 1210.]

Nulli enim nostrum dubium vel incertum est, fratres dilectissimi, illos qui prima acie, id est, deciana persecutione vulnerati fuerunt; hos postea, id est, secundo prælio ita fortiter perseverasse, ut contemnentes edicta sæcularium principum, hoc invictum haberent, quod et non metuerunt exemplo boni pastoris animam suam tradere, et sanguinem fundere, nec ullam insanientis tyranni sævitiam recusare.

Ecce quam gloriosos, quam Domino charos, schismatici isti *ligna, fœnum, stipulam* appellare non dubitant.

[*Novatian allows the lapsed no hope of mercy.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IIIA. 1213.]

12. Et tu jam, Novatiane, judicas, et nullam spem pacis ac misericordiæ habere lapsos prædicas.

[*Exhortation to confession and satisfaction in view of forgiveness.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, IIIA. 1218.]

18. Demus igitur totis viribus fidei nostræ Deo laudem, demus plenam confessionem: quandoquidem super pœnitentia nostra gaudeant virtutes cœlorum, gaudeant Angeli omnes, gaudeat et Christus. . . . Dum patet, fratres, indulgentiæ aditus, Deum plenis satisfactionibus deprecemur. Humiliemus nos, ut exaltari possimus. . . .

Ait ergo: *Dic tu facinora tua prius, ut justificeris.* Præ manu sit vobis oratio illa exomologeseos plena.

[*Not only penance, but forgiveness, is available for sinners.*]

**Contra Novatianum.**

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXXV. 2304.]

Sed forte e contrario dicitur, Pœnitentia quidem prædicata est, non tamen remissio. Si ergo pœnitentia a Deo prædicata est, fructus erit agentibus pœnitentiam. Nec enim supervacue hoc Dominus commoneret. Porro autem sciens Dominus conversis dari debere peccatorum remissionem, hoc præcepit: quippe cum dixerit, *Nolo mortem peccatoris, tantum ut convertatur et vivat.* Itaque et est fructus pœnitentiæ, sicut claruit, conversis ad Deum.



**Contra Novatianum.**

[*Novatian's position that an apostate is to be admitted to penance, but denied reconciliation.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXXV. 2304.]

Exclusa est ergo Novatiani impie composita assertio, qua verborum Domini sensum invertit, dicens, Ait Dominus, *Qui me negaverit, et ego negabo ipsum* : ut si aliquis christianus quacumque ex causa negaverit, jam redire non possit, aut certe revertens, minime recipiatur. Et ubi erit demandata pœnitentia? Cum Salvator post datam hanc sententiam negantem apostolum Petrum non negaverit. Quare? Quia pœnitentia subsequente erratum suum amarissime flevit, sciens utique conversis ignosci, et reformari eos per pœnitentiam. Sed Novatianus fingit agendam pœnitentiam. Quia enim aperte non audet negare pœnitentiam dandam, astrictus lege, subtiliter hanc frustrare contendit. Quando enim dicit, quia qui negaverit, nullo modo veniam habebit, sed negabitur et ipse in conspectu Angelorum Dei, quomodo non cum dolo agendam pœnitentiam profitetur.

[*Novatian identifies apostasy with the sin against the Holy Ghost.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXXV. 2304.]

Hinc autem manifeste fraus ejus apparet, cum subjungit dicens, *Quicumque peccaverit in Spiritum sanctum, non remittetur ei, neque hic, neque in futurum*. Quamvis alia causa sit qua peccatum est in Spiritum sanctum, et alia negare Dominum Jesum; Novatianus tamen ut huic peccato veniam deneget, unum sensum vult esse, et negantis Dominum, et peccantis in Spiritum sanctum, ut hac tergiversatione fructum amputet pœnitentiæ.

[*Novatian maintains that fornication may not find absolution.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXXV. 2305.]

Quia si fornicationi ignosci non debet, sicut Novatiano videtur, quanto magis homicidio aut adulterio.

[*No sins will be remitted hereafter, which cannot be remitted here.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXXV. 2305.]

Omne enim quod jure hic concessum non fuerit, nec in futurum poterit concedi. Hic enim, sicut dixit Dominus, aut ligantur, aut solvuntur peccata; in futuro autem nihil aliud erit, nisi remuneratio aut condemnatio. Omnis enim qui hic jure reprobatur, non poterit eligi, aut dignus in futurum judicari.

**Contra Novatianum.**

[*Before Baptism no penance required: after Baptism pardon obtained through Penance.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXXV. 2306.]

Denique ad se conversis credentibus omnia simul peccata concedit, nulla interveniente lamentatione pœnitentiæ. Unde dicit Paulus apostolus, *Sine pœnitentia enim sunt dona et vocatio Dei*. Post autem si peccaverint, per pœnitentiam poterunt mereri veniam; ut quia post acceptam gratuitam misericordiam peccaverunt, non jam gratis, sed interveniente gemitu et fletu possint ad indulgentiam pervenire.

[*Apostasy is not the sin against the Holy Ghost, and is remissible.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXXV. 2307.]

Sed majora crimina, inquit, ignosci non debent, fornicatio et idololatria. Et ubi est dictum dominicum, quo omnia peccata et blasphemias promittit remitti hominibus? Omnia penitus peccata dicit posse remitti, excepto uno. Nunc elige, Novatiane, de quibus vis dictum; de adhuc non credentibus, aut de jam credentibus? Si de non credentibus; quomodo datur remissio peccatorum, cum constet omnes, antequam credant, in Deum peccare et in Spiritum sanctum? Nam nonnulli gesta dominica magicas artes appellant, opus sancti Spiritus dæmoniis assignantes. Si autem de credentibus vis dictum, exclusa est asseveratio tua, quia omnia peccata remittentur: *Et qui dixerit, inquit, verbum contra Filium hominis, remittetur ei*. Ergo sive in Deum, sive in Christum peccatur, remittetur hominibus. Omnia enim peccata complexus est, præter in Spiritum sanctum.

[*S. Paul claimed as recognising the remission after penitence of sins of impurity.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXXV. 2308.]

Unde Apostolus fornicariis et immundis remissum probat dicens, *Ne forte veniens lugeam multos ex his, qui ante peccaverunt, et non egerunt pœnitentiam super immunditia et fornicatione, quam gesserunt*.<sup>1</sup> Probat quosdam egisse pœnitentiam, de quibus non dolet, sed gaudet: aliquos autem significat, non egisse fornicationis suæ pœnitentiam; propter quod et lugere se eos dicit, non pertinentes ad vitam, quia non egerunt pœnitentiam. Si enim hujusmodi criminis in hac vita semper agenda pœnitentia esset, non diceret lugere se eos, quia non egerunt, sed quia non agunt. Sciens autem hic et incipi, et peragi pœnitentiam, ait, quia non egerunt. Hoc enim volebat, ut veniens ad eos pacem haberet cum communione eorum. Ecce probatum est, fornicariis post actam pœnitentiam communicandum esse.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 21.



**Contra Novatianum.**

[*The letters to the Seven Churches admit penance for idolatry, and the continued communion of the evil with the good.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXXV. 2309.]

Sub una epistola<sup>1</sup> data ad ecclesiam Thyatiram duplicem Novatianæ hæresis confundit et explodit errorem: et pœnitentibus enim idololatriæ causa fructum promittit et in una Ecclesia malos non contaminare bonos ostendit, cum unius utique essent communionis: nec enim extra Ecclesiam positus scribebat dicens, *Qui habet aures*, inquit, audiat quid dicat Spiritus Ecclesiis.

[*Novatian asserts that idolatry cannot be remitted save by God.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXXV. 2310.]

Denique respondet ad hæc quæ diximus dicens, Nec ego renuo agendam pœnitentiam admissæ idololatriæ, sed ego remittere non audeo; quia crimen hoc ab eo remittendum est, in quem admissum est.

[*To Novatian apostasy is sin against the Holy Ghost, a sin for ever unpardonable: yet he teaches penance as in the hope of mercy hereafter. This is guile.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXXV. 2310.]

Omnis enim qui consilium alicui dat, ad hoc utique dat, ut quid ex eo proficere possit, prædicet. Sed quia tu, Novatiane, dolose hoc profiteris, ad illudendas mentes hominum, agendam pœnitentiam dicis. Sciens enim aperte hoc negari non posse, subtiliter facis, quia non voce sed effectum pœnitentiam amputas. Omnem certe qui idolis sacrificaverit, in Spiritum sanctum dicis peccare, cui neque hic, neque in futurum, peccatum hoc remitti per legis verba contendis. Quomodo ergo hujus delicti agendam pœnitentiam dicis, nisi quia fallis sicut supra ostendi?

[*God has conceded to the jus ecclesiasticum to assign penance and receive after penance.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXXV. 2310.]

Hoc enim concessum est juri ecclesiastico ab auctore, ut et pœnitentiam det, et post pœnitentiam recipiat.

[*The exclusiveness of Novatian's claims.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXXV. 2311.]

Sed tu hoc sic astruis, ut tibi hoc defendere videaris, ut is salvetur qui non christianus tantum, sed qui fuerit et novatianus.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. ii. 12-26.

**Contra Novatianum.**

[*An appeal to the personal consciousness of Novatian.*]

[Migne, *P. L.* XXXV. 2311.]

Novatiani obtestor conscientiam, qui nos semper accusat, si sanctos scit esse omnes quos secum habet. In tantum autem irascitur nobis, ut et Christianos nos neget; cum sciat nos ea fide initiatos, de qua ipse præsumit.

[*An arraignment of Novatian's exclusive claims. In the current persecutions no such exclusion of any professing Christ.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXXV. 2311.]

Tu autem cum ejusdem professionis sis et signaculi, non credis confitentibus nobis quæ ipse confiteris. Si aliter nos renatos scires quam tu renatus es, recte non crederes hoc nos esse quod tu es. Utquid a sacrilego persecutionem patior, si non hoc sum quod tu es? Nam si hoc de me profiterer, quod tu de me dicis; persecutionem non paterer. Ac postremum mihi credendum est de me, non tibi. Meam enim professionem quærit iudex, non tuam de me. Quid ergo me confitentem tu negas, cum verum sit, in hac causa non alienum testimonium, sed meam professionem requiri, aut pro me, aut contra me. Nolebam pro nomine torquere te contra me, ut appareret si vera confitentem et tu negares contra me, aut cui crederetur. Dolo enim hoc proponis, ut justam causam videaris habere schismatis.

[*The case of the reconciliation of Sarapion, who had sacrificed.*]

**S. Dionysius of Alexandria** (bp. A.D. 247–265).

*Letter to Fabius, bishop of Antioch* (in Eusebius, *Hist. Ecc.*, VI. 44).

[Migne, *P. G.*, XX. 629.]

Σαραπίων τις ἦν παρ' ἡμῖν πιστὸς γέρων, ἀμέμπτως μὲν τὸν πολὺν διαβιώσας χρόνον, ἐν δὲ τῷ πειρασμῷ πεσών. Οὗτος πολλάκις ἐδεῖτο, καὶ οὐδεὶς προσεῖχεν αὐτῷ, καὶ γὰρ ἐτεθύκει· ἐν νόσῳ δὲ γενόμενος, τριῶν ἑξῆς ἡμερῶν ἄφωνος καὶ ἀναίσθητος διετέλεσε. Βραχὺ δὲ ἀνασφύγας τῇ τετάρτῃ, προσεκαλέσατο τὸν θυγατριδοῦν, καὶ, 'Μέχρι τίνος,' φησὶν, ὦ τέκνον, μὲ κατέχετε; δέομαι, σπεύσατε, καὶ με θάπτον ἀπολυσάτε, τῶν πρεσβυτέρων μοί τινα κάλεσον. Καὶ ταῦτα εἰπὼν, πάλιν ἦν ἄφωνος. Ἐδραμεν ὁ παῖς ἐπὶ τὸν πρεσβύτερον· νύξ δὲ ἦν. Κάκεῖνος ἤσθenei. Ἀφικέσθαι μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἐδυνήθη. Ἐντολῆς δὲ ὑπ' ἐμοῦ δεδομένης, τοὺς ἀπαλλαττομένους τοῦ βίου, εἰ δέοιντο, καὶ μάλιστα εἰ καὶ πρότερον ἰκετεύσαντες τύχοιεν, ἀφίεσθαι ἱν' εὐέλπιδες ἀπαλλάττωνται, βραχὺ τῆς εὐχαριστίας ἐπέδωκεν τῷ παιδαρίῳ, ἀποβρέξαι κελεύσας καὶ τῷ πρεσβύτῃ κατὰ τοῦ στόματος ἐπιστάξαι. Ἐπανῆκεν ὁ παῖς φέρων· ἐγγὺς τε γενομένου, πρὶν εἰσελθεῖν, ἀνενέγκας πάλιν ὁ Σαραπίων· Ἦκες, ἔφη, τέκνον; Καὶ ὁ μὲν πρεσβύτερος ἐλθεῖν οὐκ ἠδυνήθη, σὺ δὲ ποίησον ταχέως τὸ προσταχθέν, καὶ ἀπάλλαττέ με. Ἀπέβρεξεν ὁ παῖς, καὶ ἅμα



**S. Dionysius of Alexandria.**

τε ἐνέχεε τῷ στόματι. Καὶ μικρὸν ἐκείνος καταβροχθίσας, εὐθέως ἀπέδωκ τὸ πνεῦμα. Ἄρ' οὐκ ἐναργῶς διετηρήθη καὶ παρέμεινεν ἕως λυθῆ, καὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας ἐξαλειφθείσης, ἐπὶ πολλοῖς οἷς ἔπραξε καλοῖς ὁμολογηθῆναι δυνηθῆ

[*Better to suffer anything than to cleave asunder the Church of God.*]

*Letter to Novatian (in Eusebius, Hist. Ecc., VI. 45).*

[Migne, P. G., XX. 633.]

Διονύσιος Νοουάτῳ τῷ ἀδελφῷ χαίρειν. Εἰ ἄκων, ὡς φῆς, ἤχθης, δείξεις ἂν ἀναχωρήσης ἐκόν. Ἔδει μὲν γὰρ καὶ πᾶν ὁτιοῦν παθεῖν, ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ διακόψαι τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ. Καὶ ἦν οὐκ ἀδοξότερα τῆς ἔνεκεν τοῦ μὴ εἰδωλολατρῆσαι γινομένης ἢ ἔνεκεν τοῦ μὴ σχίσαι μαρτυρία, κατ' ἐμὲ δὲ καὶ μείζων. Ἐκεῖ μὲν γὰρ ὑπὲρ μιᾶς τις τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ψυχῆς, ἐνταῦθα δὲ ὑπὲρ ὅλης τῆς ἐκκλησίας μαρτυρεῖ.

[*Announces return of the Eastern churches from Novatianist rigorism to Catholic unity.*]

*Letter to Stephen, bishop of Rome (in Eusebius, Hist. Ecc., VII. 5).*

[Migne, P. G., XX. 642.]

Ἴσθι δὲ νῦν, ἀδελφὲ, ὅτι ἦνωνται πᾶσαι αἱ πρότερον διεσχισμέναι κατὰ τε τὴν Ἀνατολὴν Ἐκκλησίαι, καὶ ἔτι προσωτέρω. Καὶ πάντες εἰσὶν ὁμόφρονες οἱ πανταχοῦ προεστῶτες, χαίροντες καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἐπὶ τῇ παρὰ προσδοκίαν εἰρήνῃ γινομένῃ. Δημητριάδης ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ, Θεόκτιστος ἐν Καισαρείᾳ, Μαζαβάνης ἐν Αἰλίᾳ κοιμηθέντος Ἀλεξάνδρου, Μαρῖνος ἐν Τύρῳ. Ἡλιόδωρος ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ ἀναπανασαμένου Θηλυμίδρου, Ἐλενος ἐν Ταρσῷ καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ τῆς Κιλικίας Ἐκκλησίαι, Φιρμιλιανὸς, καὶ πᾶσα Καππαδοκία. Τοὺς γὰρ περιφανεστέρους μόνους τῶν ἐπισκόπων ὠνόμασα, ἵνα μήτε μήκος τῇ ἐπιστολῇ, μήτε βάρος προσάψω τῷ λόγῳ. Αἱ μέντοι Συρία ὅλαι καὶ ἡ Ἀραβία οἷς ἐπαρκεῖτε ἐκάστοτε, καὶ οἷς νῦν ἐπεστείλατε, ἢ τε Μεσοποταμία, Πόντος τε καὶ Βιθυνία, καὶ συνελόντι εἰπεῖν, ἀγαλλιώνται πάντες πανταχοῦ τῇ ὁμονοίᾳ καὶ φιλαδελφίᾳ, δοξάζοντες τὸν Θεόν.

[*Opposition of Dionysius to Novatian : and its grounds.*]

*Letter to Dionysius, presbyter at Rome (in Eusebius, Hist. Ecc., VII. 8).*

[Migne, P. G., XX. 652.]

Ναυατιανῷ μὲν γὰρ εὐλόγως ἀπεχθανόμεθα, διακόψαντι τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ τινὰς τῶν ἀδελφῶν εἰς ἀσεβείας καὶ βλασφημίας ἐλκύσαντι, καὶ περὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ διδασκαλίαν ἀνοσιωτάτην ἐπείσκυκλήσαντι, καὶ τὸν χρηστότατον Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ὡς ἀνγλεῇ συκοφαντοῦντι, ἐπὶ πᾶσι δὲ τούτοις τὸ λουτρὸν ἀθετοῦντι τὸ ἅγιον, καὶ τὴν τε πρὸ αὐτοῦ πίστιν καὶ ὁμολογίαν ἀνατρέποντι, τό τε Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐξ αὐτῶν, εἰ καὶ τις ἦν ἐλπίς τοῦ παραμείναι ἢ καὶ ἐπανελθεῖν πρὸς αὐτοὺς, παντελῶς φυγαδεύονται.

## THE DECIAN PERSECUTION

This period admits the lapsed to reconciliation.

THE period of the Decian persecution is important in the history of the penitential discipline of the Church as bringing with it another stage in the direction of indulgence. The preceding period in which the concessions of Callistus had carried the concurrence of the Church, notwithstanding all the bitter words of Tertullian at Carthage, and the sullen resistance of a conservative section in Rome itself, saw the position definitely established that the adulterer was admissible to communion after due penance accomplished. The period following the Decian persecution will see established the further position that the lapsed or apostate Christian is also admissible to communion in this life after a proper penitential discipline. The new position is not attained without a struggle: and the Novatianist schism, which prolongs and records that struggle, will last in much vigour and pertinacity for centuries to come. But in the Catholic Church there will be no going back from the new position. The Church asserts the prerogative of absolution with which her Master has endowed her upon earth as being effective for even those unhappy Christians who in the times of stress have flinched and failed. Incidentally the period will also have much to teach as regards the claim of the martyrs and confessors to intervene with a dispensing authority.

Carthage and Rome the two centres.

Again the two great centres of force and movement are Carthage and Rome. But whereas in the time of Callistus it was Rome which took the initiative and succeeded in dominating, while at Carthage Tertullian, by this time become a Montanist, was ineffectually, if violently, protesting; in this next stage the positions are reversed. It is rather Carthage in the person of S. Cyprian which leads the present counsels and so dominates the future action of the Church: while at Rome Cornelius is thankful rather to follow than to lead, and Novatian raises the standard of revolt. Nor is this prominence of Carthage in itself very remarkable. In the Latin-speaking provinces the church of Carthage may be said to have been hardly second to any Latin church. The church of Rome was still largely a Church of aliens and of slaves, though its membership might number thousands. It had hardly yet learned to use with freedom the Latin speech of Italy. Not only Hermas and Clement at the close of the first century, but Hippolytus at the close of the second, wrote in Greek. The



correspondence of the Roman church with Cyprian was in Latin, but setting aside the letters of Novatian, the style of which is clear and correct, the remaining letters from Rome are themselves a remarkable illustration of the deficiency of the Roman church in literary culture. In contrast with this Africa was a centre of Latin education. Juvenal had long ago called her the nurse of advocates. Tertullian and Cyprian stand as writers of Latin far above any other Christian teachers of their time. Tertullian had taken in hand the extraordinarily difficult task of employing Latin for the Christian theology : and Cyprian in his letters and treatises clothes in a finished rhetoric the clear perceptions of his controlling mind. It is thus quite intelligible that Rome came to be deferential to Cyprian, and that Cyprian was not lightly overborne by Rome.

Of this period indeed Cyprian is in the West the dominating figure. His record is remarkable. An advocate by profession; a prominent personality of the African capital; wealthy, competent, cultivated; he had in middle life accepted Baptism. This appears to have been in A.D. 246. On the death of Donatus, bishop or pope of Carthage, in A.D. 248, Cyprian was summoned by the popular acclaim to assume the vacant chair. There were opponents, among whom were five of the leading clergy, and clearly the appointment to this important see of a neophyte of two years' standing not only contravened the instructions of S. Paul to S. Timothy, but violated the most obvious cautions of experience. And yet, as has not seldom happened, the popular voice carried the truer wisdom. In another eighteen months the Decian persecution was raging : and in the face of an outburst of hostile fury unparalleled at least in living memory Cyprian was proved a worthy leader of the faithful. A strong administrator, with a lucid legal mind, he could seize the essential lines of distinction, and insist on their observance. He was a faithful servant of God; and it may be expected that God acted through him in the determination of courses of action which gave direction to the Church for all time. Yet it would be a mistake to ignore the influence of Cyprian's marked natural personality. He was no subtle thinker, or penetrating theologian. But he was an exceptionally able administrator, clear-headed, forceful, and tenacious. And he is the true centre and dominating impulse of the disciplinary movements of his time.

S. Cyprian  
the dominating figure.  
His record.

Cyprian was elected bishop after the June of A.D. 248. In October A.D. 249 Decius was heading the legions of the West in the insurrection which placed him on the imperial throne. In January A.D. 250 the edict of Decius against the Christians was already working havoc through the empire. It should be realised that this ordinance was a definite edict, therein differing from the standing powers of the magistracy which seem to have been responsible for the sufferings of many Christian martyrs at times

The edict of  
Decius.

of no special persecution. Every provincial governor could at any time without special instructions seek out and bring to justice *latrones, sacrilegos, plagiaros, fures*: and among these a place could without difficulty be found for Christians. Also every provincial governor was expected to repress any form of organised association, religious or other, as being an *imperium in imperio*, and so constituting a peril to the state. But the edict of Decius stands contrasted with these ordinary powers. It was a special pronouncement of the most definite character. It was severe to cruelty: probably the more severe because its author was a man of principle, who sought by the sternness of repression to bring back the probities of the older Rome. The edict was issued in the last days of A.D. 249, or in the beginnings of A.D. 250. The exact wording has not come down to us. So far as can be gathered, the provisions of the edict were these following:—

- (a) The world was called upon to sacrifice to the gods and to the genius of the emperor.
- (b) A day was named on which all the subjects of the empire must comply with the requirements of the edict.
- (c) Christianity was denounced in so far as it forbade conformity with these demands. Christians were to sacrifice and their officers were proscribed.
- (d) The requirements of the edict were to be enforced by penalty.<sup>1</sup>

To the public provisions of the edict were appended instructions for the magistrates. In each centre the local magistrates assisted by a commission of local notables (*primores*) were to preside at the sacrifices, to issue certificates to the compliants, and to register their names. When the appointed day was past recusants were to be sought out. The local magistrates might not put to death, but were at liberty to employ imprisonment and torture to induce compliance. The proconsul in due course was to pronounce sentence on the intractable.

Extent of  
the perse-  
cution.  
Wide-  
spread  
martyrdom.

The extent of the persecution is sufficiently indicated by its catalogue of martyrs. Fabian at Rome, Alexander at Jerusalem, Babylas at Antioch, Pionius at Smyrna, Carpus and his deacon at Thyatira, Trypho and Respicius in Bithynia, Irenæus at Neo-Cæsarea, Acacius at the Phrygian Antioch, Polyeuctes in Armenia, Peter and others at Lampsacus, the ten martyrs of Crete, Cassian at Imola, Martial at Limoges, Epimachus and Nemesis at Alexandria, the confessors of whom mention will be presently made at Carthage, show that the whole empire was affected. This time the persecution had to be reckoned with everywhere.

The martyrs were the flower of the Christian faithful. They were *fideles* indeed. The panegyrics of their contemporaries may

<sup>1</sup> J. A. F. Gregg, *The Decian Persecution*, pp. 71 sqq.



seem to the student who reads them now at his fireside exaggerated and hysterical. Yet surely the instinct which prompted these commendations was true. He, and only he, who would be faithful unto death, was a Christian indeed. Yet in the face of the eager rush to conform which disgraced the Christian community, how glorious a hero was the martyr seen to be.

For, alas! the apostasy in the Decian persecution was simply appalling. The pen of Novatian writing on behalf of the Roman clergy from the standpoint of the Roman experience and information thus describes the occurrences of the time:—

But appalling apostasy

“Look upon well nigh the whole world devastated; see the relics and ruins of the fallen prostrate on every side; and for this reason conclude that a counsel is called for as far-reaching as the offence is seen to be widely diffused.”<sup>1</sup>

Not long afterwards Novatian himself withdrew from this position, and became identified with a rigoristic schism. But his statement here gives exact expression to what proved to be the mind of the Church. The apostasies of the period made a new situation. The new situation called for new treatment. The Church had to bring to bear upon a wide apostasy a broad and faithful wisdom. As will be seen, she found for the penitent apostate a place indeed, yet no ready place. She maintains her commission to retain and to remit; she alters from this time forward the conditions of its exercise for the apostate; she does this because it is well to apply a *grande consilium* to a *delictum late propagatum*: and as she does it shall we not discern why as regards the sins of men the Lord has promised to retain what she retains and to remit what she remits? As the ages pass, the circumstances vary. The conditions of offence, the measure of guilt, the liabilities of peril, the calls of charity, all take new phases, and speak with voices new. If the Lord has laid down no one immutable frame of discipline, but has committed His offices of reconciliation to the ministry of a living Church, shall not His wisdom be justified of her children?

A new situation.  
A new remedy demanded.

The church of Carthage could claim no less than other churches a glorious roll of martyrs and confessors. There was, for example, that Mappalicus who died constant under repeated torture. Many there were, not only men, but also women and minors, who declined to sprinkle the incense, or to taste of the sacrifice, or to put on the liturgic veil. To such recalcitrants were assigned two stifling cells which in a measure anticipated the horrors of the black hole of Calcutta. When heat and overcrowding and thirst had done their work fifteen were dead. Of the presbyter Numidicus it is recorded that he prepared many of the faithful, and that in turn he and his wife were themselves called upon to undergo

The persecution at Carthage.

Martyrs.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 31.

torture by fire. The wife was burnt to death: Numidicus, left for dead, was afterwards revived. These, and many beside them, stood steadfast for the name of Christ.

Lapsed.

None who knew the composition and temper of the African churches could well expect that all who bore the Christian name would thus stand true. Yet even those best qualified to judge, such as Cyprian himself, were all unprepared for the rush which was made by the faithless to comply with the edict. S. Cyprian thus sets down the black record of those days: "Immediately at the first words of the threatening foe a vast number<sup>1</sup> of the brethren betrayed their faith. They were not cast down by the onset of persecution, but cast themselves down by voluntary lapse." Some

"did not wait to be apprehended ere they ascended, or to be interrogated ere they denied. Many were conquered before the battle; prostrated before the attack. Nor did they even leave it to be said for them, that they seemed to sacrifice unwillingly. They ran to the market place of their own accord; freely they hastened to death, as if they had formerly wished it, as if they would embrace an opportunity now given which they had always desired. How many were put off by the magistrates at that time, when evening was coming on; how many even asked, that their destruction might not be delayed!"<sup>2</sup>

Some not content with their own apostasy urged wife and children to follow in their steps. Of one matron named Bona it is recorded that when dragged by her husband to the altar, and forced to perform the act of sacrifice, her hands being held by some present, she cried aloud, "I have not done it, ye have done it."<sup>3</sup> Of the clergy many fled, and some lapsed. One bishop at least, Repostus of Tiburnuc, reverted to paganism; and carried the main part of his flock with him.

*Sacrificati,  
thurificati,  
libellatici.*

All these were apostates by direct personal act. In the first rank of offence were the *sacrificati*, who sacrificed the victim's flesh in pagan worship. Only less in offensive circumstance, not less in faithlessness, were the *thurificati*, who sprinkled incense on the altars. But besides these there was the large class of *libellatici*. For a Christian to procure a certificate that he had sacrificed even though he had not; and to use this certificate in obtaining for himself the recognition of his status as a loyal pagan citizen, and his exemption from all the perils which threatened the faithful Christian; was rightly regarded by the contemporary church as a definite act of apostasy. And yet, faithless and cowardly as it was, the act of the libellatic was not felt to be equally evil with that of the sacrificer. Cyprian in the after days

<sup>1</sup> *De Lapsis*, 7. Does *maximus numerus* mean "a vast number," or "the vast majority"?

<sup>2</sup> *De Lapsis*, 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep.* 18.



when he is providing for the reconciliation of the lapsed, insists upon drawing a broad line of distinction between the *libellatici* and the *sacrificati*.<sup>1</sup>

In recent years the surmises which formerly found expression as to the exact character of the *libelli* thus executed have been replaced by the knowledge which the discovery of certain actual documents of this character has now afforded. Two such *libelli* are printed above. Of these the first, which may be styled *Libellus I*, is in the Brugsch collection at Berlin. It was discovered in the Fayoum, south-west of Cairo, in 1893. It is a papyrus leaf of about eight inches by three. It has been reproduced in facsimile by Dr. Krebs. The other, which may be called *Libellus II* is in the collection of the Archduke Rainer, and consists of fragments discovered in 1894, which have been carefully pieced together by Dr. Wessely. The character of these documents may be seen from the translation of *Libellus I* which follows:—

Examples  
of *libelli*.

“To the commissioners of the sacrifices of the village of Alexander’s island from Aurelius Diogenes [son of] Satabûs of the village of Alexander’s island. About 72. Scar on right eye-brow. I was both constant in ever sacrificing to the gods, and now in your presence according to the precepts I sacrificed and drank and tasted of the victims, and I beseech you to attach your signature. May you ever prosper!

“I, Aurelius Diogenes, have delivered this.

“I, Aurelius . . . [? saw] him sacrificing.

“I, Mys[thes son of] . . . now have signed.”

If this *libellus* may be taken as a normal document of its kind, it is highly interesting. It begins by giving the name of the person, his place of residence, his age, and any physical marks to aid in identification, as in a modern passport. There follows the definite statement by the person that he has always sacrificed to the gods, and has now again, in the presence of the commissioners, sacrificed, and drunk, and tasted of the victims. The document is then countersigned by two other persons, presumably the commissioners.

It may be inferred that such a document would ordinarily be executed for all persons who sacrificed, probably on payment of a fee to the clerks of the court. It would then be entered on the *acta*, perhaps published in the *forum*. It is not difficult to see how by the judicious proffer of an enhanced fee the document might frequently be forthcoming without the act of sacrifice. But in the document the person had to state directly that he had sacrificed, and to sign this statement. He was to this extent a lapsed person, an apostate. Even if he had only used in proof of his apostasy a statement by another that he had sacrificed, the

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 52, 13.

Church would doubtless have held him unfaithful still. But the form given may probably be taken as the most usual type : and the condemnation which it bears upon its face is plain enough.

A great  
apostasy.

Its causes  
various.

Result for  
all, exclu-  
sion.

S. Cyprian was even from the early days of the persecution confronted with a numerous and ever-growing array of the unfaithful. In his treatise *On the Lapsed* he seeks to probe the causes of this great apostasy. He speaks of the prevalence of greed for this world's gear; of the unspiritual character of the priests and of the subordinate ministry; of unworthy tricks of personal adornment; of mixed marriages with unbelievers; of evil speaking and false swearing; of the immersion of bishops in secular business.<sup>1</sup> But whatsoever the cause of their defection the result of it was that there was no longer place for them in the Christian Church. Whether they were *sacrificati*, or *thurificati*, or *libellatici*, all were faithless. All had by their own act placed themselves outside the Christian fold. The tradition of the Christian Church of that day was that all such apostate persons were to be precluded from reconciliation in this present life. None barred them from the mercies of the judgment to come if they could find those mercies. But on earth the Church simply recognised the fact that they were outside her fold : and there she left them. Penance they might perform if so they would : but this side the grave was no reconciliation.

Difficult  
position of  
Cyprian in  
face of the  
demand for  
reconcilia-  
tion.

What was Cyprian to do with such persons if they should seek to be reconciled? So long as they remained, or were content to appear, pagans, no question arose. But when they came to their bishop, and pleaded for reconciliation, what courses lay open to him? Let it be remembered that in A.D. 250 Cyprian was a Christian of only four years' standing. Not only had he to learn his work as a bishop as he went, but he must also have been still making his first acquaintance with many aspects of the mind and temper of the Christian Church. Look where he would the teaching of the previous time seemed to be the same. The apostate had no place in the Church on earth : he was cut off. Not only was this the case in the pages of the Carthaginian Tertullian, whom in spite of the Montanism of the later years Cyprian so greatly honoured : but up to this time in the actual practice of the Catholic Church alike on the northern and on the southern shores of the Mediterranean the apostate was not received. The adulterer might at this period be reconciled after due penance performed. But the apostate might be no more reconciled than ever before.

Reconcilia-  
tion at  
death first  
indicated  
from Rome.

It is noteworthy that the first indication of an advance from the position of entire rigorism as regards the apostate to the accordance of death-bed communion to the penitent offender comes from Rome. A letter was written by the Roman presbyters and deacons to the clergy of Carthage at the time when the adminis-

<sup>1</sup> *De Lapsis*, 6.



tration of the Roman see lay with them after the martyrdom of Fabian.<sup>1</sup> It is a letter of coarse innuendo, not obscurely likening S. Cyprian in his retirement to the unfaithful shepherds of Ezekiel, and to the hireling shepherd of the Gospel. It is a letter which Cyprian returned to the writers expressing with dignified irony the hope that it might be a forgery, since it lacked both signature and address, and surprised him at once by its matter, by its style, and by the paper on which it was written. The unpolished style and incorrect constructions are indeed a striking example of the want of culture in Latin letters which at this time marked Roman Christianity. But the letter is none the less of marked importance as indicating the temper of the Roman clergy at the earliest stage of the Decian persecution (Jan. A.D. 250). It makes important pronouncements on three several points. (1) It is not well to abandon the lapsed, though they have separated themselves, but to exhort them to do penance (*agere pœnitentiam*), "if in any way they may receive pardon from Him Who is able to grant it." (2) One result of such penance should be that the penitent apostates if challenged anew "may confess (*i. e.* confess Christ in the face of persecution) and may so make amends for their previous sin." (3) Communion should be granted to penitent persons in sickness. All this is in a high degree interesting. (a) The indication that the penitent is to seek pardon from Him Who is able to grant it, seems to indicate that the Church cannot grant it. (b) The suggestion that the best way of finding this pardon is for the penitent to confess Christ when next apprehended, and that such confession will make amends for the previous sin, is noteworthy. It has been seen that the efficacy of martyrdom to effect the reconciliation of a lapsed Christian had come to be admitted in the fullest manner even by the rigorist teachers. Both Tertullian and Origen are entirely clear in the assertion of the efficacy of martyrdom. And this position, now generally accepted, leads, as the Roman clergy point out, to an obvious suggestion. The Church of the Decian days cannot indeed allow under the very stress of persecution that the apostate is ordinarily admissible to reconciliation: but if his penitence be real, is it not open to him to retrace his steps, and to take the stand which once he failed to take? And if he do, the Church is prepared to recognise that God will certainly accept this *amends*, and that the Church must accept it too. (c) After these indications we are hardly prepared to find that the Roman clergy are of opinion that in times of grave sickness the lapsed should be communicated. But this considerable step in advance of the rigorist position the Roman clergy do take in this letter. All allow that the penitent is not debarred from the mercy of the great day. But before he goes forth to face the terrors of that day, the Roman clergy are now prepared to accord the reconciliation of the Church (*subveniri eis debet*).

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. 2.*

We have in this letter the position which could be taken up in the corporate name of the clergy of Rome at the time when the Decian persecution had smitten them, but the schism of Novatian had not yet found place. It is reasonable to assume that the Roman clerical body must on this occasion have included representatives of the three recurring tendencies or parties of the time; the party of rigour, the party of indulgence, and the party of compromise. Before long the tension will prove too great, and the bands of brotherhood will snap. Cornelius and the Catholic Church will demand the path of concession: and the schism of Novatian will for long centuries stand firm on what seem the ancient paths.

At Carthage  
a clamour  
for recon-  
ciliation.

In Carthage, notwithstanding the sternness of all precedents, the apostasy has hardly found place before there arises a clamour of demand that the lapsed shall be restored. And the demand is largely based upon a startling claim which must at once call for our attention. It is asserted that those who have been martyrs or confessors (the words are not yet consistently differentiated) for the faith of Christ, may claim the right, or may exercise the privilege, of according the Church's peace to their weaker brethren who have failed.

The claim  
of the  
martyrs.

The claim, as has been seen, was not without precedent. Tertullian, in his earliest work, the *Ad Martyres*, the date of which may be placed as early as A.D. 197, says that certain who did not possess peace in the Church were wont to supplicate for it from the martyrs in prison. He bids the martyrs to foster and guard this peace in themselves, "if haply ye may be able to afford it also to others." A still earlier indication of the intervention of the martyrs is to be found in the circular letter of the churches of Lyons and Vienne to the churches of Asia and Phrygia, which may be assigned to A.D. 177.<sup>1</sup> In this letter it is stated that "the martyrs gave grace (ἐχαρίζοντο) to those who were not martyrs": and again, "they asked life and He gave it them: which also they shared with their neighbours."

With regard to Tertullian it has to be remembered that in the *De Pudicitia* he repudiated as absurd any pretension of martyrs to condone the capital offences of idolatry, impurity, and bloodshed.

The  
exaggera-  
tion of this  
claim at  
Carthage.

But now at Carthage in the Decian persecution the proportions assumed by the claim of the martyrs or confessors at once became almost overwhelming. Cyprian found that those who had "polluted their hands and mouths with sacrilegious contact, or who had no less infected their consciences with wicked certificates, were everywhere soliciting the martyrs, and were also corrupting the confessors with importunate and excessive entreaties, so that, without any discrimination or examination of the individuals

<sup>1</sup> In Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, V. 1, 2.



themselves, thousands of certificates were being daily given contrary to the law of the gospel.”<sup>1</sup> A little later “some of the lapsed, whether of their own accord, or by the suggestion of another, broke forth with a daring demand, as though they would endeavour by a violent effort to extort the peace that had been promised to them by the martyrs and confessors.”<sup>2</sup> This attitude on the part of the lapsed during the actual continuance of the persecution in which they had failed, and in which it was still presumably open to them to confess Christ, is as astonishing as it is new in Christian history. Aubé suggests as reasons for it: (1) the enormous numbers of the lapsed, which could not be overlooked, and which were bound to tell in any practical settlement,<sup>3</sup> and (2) the sense of the real courage which was involved in the present acknowledgment of faith before the Church with all the future risks which that acknowledgment might carry; a situation very different, after all, from that of the renegades who were still flaunting their infidelity away from all appearance of touch with those who had been their brethren.<sup>4</sup> To these reasons must be added the rapid growth of the acceptance among Christians of the theory that the privilege of letters of reconciliation could not be denied to the martyrs. Still, whatsoever causes may be discerned for the insistence and clamour of the lapsed at Carthage, it was altogether a new thing in the Church of Christ. It gravely shocked the Roman Christian, who had no similar experience. It called forth from Cyprian the severe reminder that the lapsed were not the Church.

Clearly Cyprian has no light decision before him. The decision which has to be made is so important that he simply declines to make it till the peace of the Church is restored and a council can meet and determine. In other words, till such a council can meet, Cyprian will not in ordinary cases allow the lapsed to be reconciled even on the production of the confessors' letters. Only in one event will he relax this rule. In the case of lapsed persons who are “departing from this life,” if (1) they hold a *libellus* from the martyrs, and (2) have made *exomologesis*, and (3) have received the imposition of hands after penance, they are “remitted to the Lord with the peace promised to them by the martyrs.”<sup>5</sup>

Cyprian declines to anticipate a council.

One exception.

It should be carefully noted that S. Cyprian as bishop nowhere and at no time lays down the position that apostasy is necessarily irremissible on earth, the position which seemed so clear and indisputable to Tertullian, and which Cyprian seems to have echoed without much thought in his early *Testimonia*. His present action in admitting one class of these penitents to

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *L'Église et l'État dans la 2<sup>e</sup> moitié du III<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 205.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>5</sup> Cyprian gave instructions to his own clergy as to this concession in the two letters numbered 12 and 13 (*bis ad clerum literas feci*, *Ep.* 14). He announced it to the Roman clergy in *Ep.* 14.

reconciliation, restricted though it is, nevertheless puts aside once and for all that old extreme contention.

His decision compared with that of the Roman clergy.

S. Cyprian arrives at his decision in the face of threatening clamour on every hand. He would fain disclaim it as his personal ruling. He says: "nor in this did I give a law, or rashly constitute myself a source of authority (*auctorem*)."<sup>1</sup> The honour of the martyrs had to be maintained: and also Cyprian did not wish to dissociate himself from the judgment of the Roman church given in the letter "which you lately despatched hither to my clergy by Crementius the sub-deacon to the effect that assistance should be given to those who might after their lapse be seized with sickness, and might penitently desire communion."<sup>1</sup>

It raises a smile to remember that the letter sent by the hand of Crementius to the Carthaginian clergy was the very letter which Cyprian had returned to Rome with a dignified expression of doubt as to whether it could be possibly authentic. But, as has been seen, that letter, with all its faults of style and temper, contained some important indications of the policy of the Roman Church; and among them the quite new departure of according communion to lapsed persons when mortal sickness should overtake them, provided that they did penance for their act (*si agant pœnitentiam facti sui*), and desired communion. This Cyprian had doubtless very carefully noted, and in the storm which followed it had not been without its weight with him. But though he now declares to the Roman clergy that he thinks it right to stand by their judgment lest any act of his should in aught differ, he does in fact give a quite different judgment. He is at one with the Roman clergy, if somewhat more definite than they, when he requires as conditions of the death-bed reconciliation, that the person shall have made (1) *exomologesis*, and (2) have received the imposition of hands after penance (*in pœnitentiam*).<sup>2</sup> But he farther requires that the person must be armed with a martyr's *libellus*, which is no part of the requirements of the Roman clergy.<sup>3</sup> The penitent apostate without a martyr's *libellus* passes unreconciled.

Farther, in spite of all the clamour around him, Cyprian flatly refuses to go unless and until a council may arrive at some larger decision. He recognises better than some that this is no question of merely local importance. "This is the cause, not of a few, nor of one church, nor of one province, but of the whole world."<sup>4</sup>

Case of the lapsed persons who were left to die unreconciled.

It is obvious that S. Cyprian's provisional order does not meet the case of one class of persons, who stood in not less urgent need than the dying penitents who held recommendations from the martyrs. What about those other dying penitents who did not hold such recommendations? The remarks of S. Cyprian about the unreconciled lapsed are full of interest.

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* 14.

<sup>2</sup> On the imposition of hands see Ch. IX.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep.* 14.

<sup>4</sup> *Ep.* 13.



“For those who, being meek and humble, and doing their penance in truth, shall have persevered in good works, shall not be left destitute of the help and aid of the Lord, but they also will be cared for by a Divine remedy.”<sup>1</sup>

S. Cyprian thus clearly indicates his acceptance of what seems to have been the all but universal belief in the time of rigorism that those who were left unreconciled by the Church might still look for pardon in the day of the Lord.

In the action taken by Cyprian it will be noticed that he showed himself not unwilling to accord some weight to the martyr's certificates. It was obvious, however, that if such weight were to be attached to them either now or afterwards they must at least conform to some reasonable restrictions. It was insufferable that any martyr, however well he might deserve of his brethren, should shoot a certificate into the air to cover whomsoever, as in the case of the famous manifesto of Lucian, or that other general indulgence of Paulus. Only in a less degree objectionable was the practice of indicating a group of persons as in the phrase “*Communicet ille . . . cum suis*,” a phrase which in the usage of the day would cover not only relatives, but slaves and freedmen, the whole tribe of clients, and practically any who cared to use it. Accordingly S. Cyprian, addressing the martyrs, writes:—

Restriction  
of the  
privilege  
of the  
martyrs.

“I beg that you will in the certificate designate by name those whom you have under your own observation, whom you know personally, whose penitence you see to approximate to satisfaction; and so direct to us letters in conformity with faith and discipline.”<sup>2</sup>

It may also be noted that in considering the claim put forward for the prerogative of the confessors S. Cyprian very reasonably points out how some of those who had confessed Christ afterwards became persons of indifferent or scandalous life.<sup>3</sup>

It soon became apparent that on the subject of the privilege of the martyrs there was a fundamental difference of opinion even among those who were prepared to admit some exercise of the privilege. Was their intervention to be regarded simply as a weighty petition for reconciliation, which, as it would doubtless be heard before the throne of God, should find no less considerate hearing from the bishop? Or was it an actual communication of the grace of reconciliation, to which the bishop had simply to give effect? In one of their letters the Roman clergy point out with the Roman logic<sup>4</sup> that the mere fact of the lapsed being sent by the martyrs to the bishops with a request for reconciliation proves that the bishops are the arbiters of such reconciliation. At Carthage some at least of the confessors were far from accepting any such position. The extraordinary letter put forth by the confessor Lucian on behalf of a little group for whom he

Did the  
martyrs  
simply in-  
tercede, or  
did they  
give a  
grace of  
reconcilia-  
tion?

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Epp. 5, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 30.

Letter of  
Lucian.

was spokesman is one of the most remarkable documents of Christian history.

"All the confessors to pope Cyprian greeting. Know that to all whose conduct since the commission of their sin has in your judgment been satisfactory we have granted peace: and it has been our will that this instrument should be made known by you to the other bishops also. It is our desire that you should have peace with the holy martyrs. Lucian has written this, there being present of the clergy both an exorcist and a reader."<sup>1</sup>

Here is the whole startling claim. The power of the keys belongs to the martyrs, and the bishops must do as they are told.

Cyprian  
will not  
budge.

It is clear that there could be no beating about the bush after the receipt of such a document as this. Cyprian must take his stand. He writes to the presbyters and deacons that he has read the confessors' letter, but that the matter "waits for the counsel and judgment of all of us," and that he does not "dare to prejudge it, and so assume a common cause for" his "own decision."<sup>2</sup> They are therefore to abide by the instructions already given. Many of his colleagues had agreed "that there must be no departure from them until, peace being granted to us by the Lord, we shall be able to assemble together into one place and to examine into the cases of individuals." In another letter Cyprian decides in reply to an inquiry of Caldonius regarding lapsed persons, who had afterwards confessed Christ under a second challenge and then suffered exile, that such persons "by true penitence and by the glory of a confession of the Lord have restored" peace "to themselves." "They have lifted themselves up and have begun to stand with Christ."<sup>3</sup> The confession of Christ in the face of persecution is thus regarded as *ipso facto* restoring a lapsed person to the peace of the Church; a restoration which has simply to be recognised. In this matter, too, we note that Cyprian is at one with the views of the Roman clergy. He goes on to express a wish that others also would thus repent after their fall, and so restore themselves to their former status.

Lapsed  
persons  
confessing  
Christ later  
restore  
peace to  
themselves.

Irregular  
reconcilia-  
tions by  
some of the  
clergy.

S. Cyprian found before long that though his provisional decision had doubtless cost him grave anxiety, it was yet easier to utter a decision than to ensure compliance with it. His clergy were not always disposed to applaud. Some probably, like those five who had opposed his election, regarded him as a novice dealing with problems beyond his strength. The sympathy of others, whether on grounds of temperament or personal friendship, lay all in the direction of indulgence. It is not much to be wondered at that some such clergy are found taking their own line, and communicating the lapsed in spite of the bishop. Such, for instance, were Gaius, the priest of Didda, and his deacon. In one

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 19.



epistle Cyprian commends those of his clergy who decline to communicate with Gaius and his deacon, and decides for the future that

“if any unrestrained and impetuous person, whether of our presbyters or deacons, or of strangers, should dare, before our decree, to communicate with the lapsed, let him be expelled from our communion, and plead the cause of his rashness before all of us when, by the Lord’s permission, we shall assemble together again.”<sup>1</sup>

Incidentally in contrasting the lax procedure of some of the clergy with the penitential discipline of the church of Carthage in ordinary times, S. Cyprian affords a valuable insight into what that discipline was. He says:—

The penitential discipline of the Church of Carthage.

“For whereas sinners do penance in the case of minor sins for a definite time, and in accordance with the procedure of discipline (*secundum disciplinæ ordinem*), come to exomologesis, and receive the right of communion by the imposition of hands of the bishop and clergy; now, at an immature time, and while the persecution is still going on, and the peace of the Church herself is not yet restored, (the lapsed) are admitted to communion, and the offering is made in their name, and though their *pœnitentia* is not yet performed, their *exomologesis* not yet made, the hand not yet laid upon them by the bishop and the clergy, the Eucharist is given to them.”<sup>2</sup>

This passage occurs in a letter to the clergy on the subject of these rash reconciliations.

The phrase *minoribus peccatis* should be compared with the *levioribus delictis* of Tertullian. It will be remembered that the first certain statement of absolution as given by the bishop is to be found in Tertullian’s words “the kind of Penance after Baptism, which obtains pardon from the bishop for the lighter offences.”<sup>3</sup> The Church discipline of Tertullian’s day which could lead up to the bishop’s absolution was for *leviora delicta* only, and not for the three capital sins. The Church discipline of Carthage in the time of Cyprian is still exercised in *minoribus peccatis*, and is not yet understood to extend to capital sins. Only it seems to have been understood in Cyprian’s time that sins against purity might come within the scope of this discipline. In a letter addressed to the people (*Ep. xi.*) Cyprian again refers to the course of discipline which was in use for minor offences, and makes the remarkable statement that these *minora delicta* were such as were not committed against GOD (*quæ non in Deum committuntur*). It may be understood that these sins were not sins directed immediately against the Divine majesty in the sense in which this was the case

It is in *minoribus peccatis*.

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. 28.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. 9.*

<sup>3</sup> *Penitentia species post fidem, quæ levioribus delictis veniam ab episcopo consequitur.*

with the sin of apostasy. A similar phrase had been used by Cyprian in his early *Testimonia* when he had stated that remission could not be made in the Church to him who had sinned against GOD (*qui in Deum deliquerit*).<sup>1</sup> Reference may be made to previous writers to elucidate the distinction between sins committed against GOD and sins not committed against GOD. Tertullian in the *De Pudicitia* <sup>2</sup> had pointed out that by our Lord's instruction to S. Peter we are to pardon sins committed against ourselves even to seventy times seven. These sins can thus be pardoned by men. But he maintains that only GOD can forgive "the mortal sins which have been committed against Him, or against His Temple." Origen in the *De Oratione* had indicated three classes of sins—(1) those minor offences against one another which we can forgive one another, (2) "incurable" sins, at the other end of the scale, and (3) the intermediate sins which can be remitted by spiritual men duly qualified.

S. Cyprian now represents the course of discipline in use in his day as only concerned with *minora delicta*, "which are not committed against GOD." In this letter to the people (*Ep.* xi.) he uses the same argument as in the letter addressed to the clergy, that whereas for minor sins there is an accepted order or discipline, involving *pœnitentia*, *exomologesis*, and the laying on of hands by the bishop and clergy before the offender could be restored to communion, it was obviously fitting that not less should be demanded in the case of offenders by apostasy.

"I hear that some of the Presbyters neither mindful of the Gospel nor considering what the martyrs have written to me, nor reserving to the bishop the honour of his priesthood and chair (*sacerdotii sui et cathedræ*),<sup>3</sup> have already begun to communicate with the lapsed and to offer on their behalf, and to give them the Eucharist; when it was fitting that they should attain to these things through the received order (*per ordinem*). For whereas in the case of minor offences which are not committed against GOD, penance is performed (*pœnitentia agatur*) for a set time (*justo tempore*), and *exomologesis* is made, and the life of him who is doing penance is under inspection; and whereas none may come to communion unless first the hand has been laid upon him by the bishop and clergy, how much more in these most grave and extreme offences ought all things to be observed with caution and system according to the discipline of the Lord (*secundum disciplinam Domini*)."<sup>4</sup>

In another letter addressed to the martyrs and confessors on the abuse of their recommendations S. Cyprian writes:—

<sup>1</sup> *Testimonia adversus Judæos*, iii. 28.

<sup>2</sup> *C.* 21.

<sup>3</sup> The word *sacerdotii* should be noted. It is equivalent to "episcopate." It is not yet employed in connexion with the presbyterate.

<sup>4</sup> *Ep.* 11.



“ They, in defiance of the law of the Gospel, in defiance of your valued request, before penance done, before exomologesis made of their most serious and extreme offence, before the hand laid upon them by the bishop and clergy on the fulfilment of their penance, dare to make the offering for them, and to give them the Eucharist, that is to say, to profane the Body of the Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

Again in the *De Lapsis* Cyprian makes a similar complaint of the violence done to the Body and Blood of the Lord by the admission to communion of lapsed persons

“ before their sins are expiated, before *exomologesis* made of their crime, before the conscience has been purged by sacrifice and by the hand of the priest (*sacerdotis*).<sup>2</sup>

From these various passages we gather that there was in the church of Carthage in the year A.D. 250, at the time of the outbreak of the Decian persecution, a “ procedure ” (*ordo*), a “ procedure of discipline ” (*ordo disciplinæ*), or “ discipline of the Lord ” (*disciplina Domini*); that this might occur in the ordinary course in the case of minor sins (*in minoribus peccatis*), such sins being minor as compared with the capital sins of apostasy and bloodshed, though probably including sins of impurity, and certainly being sins more grave than the sins usually classed as venial in the moral theology of the present day; that this procedure involved (a) *pænitentia*, (b) *exomologesis*, and (c) the imposition of the hands of the bishop and clergy for the admission of the persons to communion. These three features are on each of the occasions mentioned in the same order. The *pænitentia* had to be rendered or performed (*acta, actam*) for an appropriate but fixed period (*justo tempore*), such period being presumably indicated at least by a presbyter. The *exomologesis* accompanied this *pænitentia*, but so as to be on each occasion mentioned in the second place. When the fixed term of penance had been fulfilled, and the exomologesis made, the procedure of discipline provided that the penitent should be formally reconciled by the imposition of hands, such imposition being made by (a) the bishop, and (b) the clergy (*episcopi et cleri, ab episcopo et clero, sacerdotis*). This reconciliation carried the right of communion (*jus communicationis*).

The procedure comprised  
(a) *pænitentia*,  
(b) *exomologesis*,  
(c) imposition of hands.

It is not easy to determine what exactly is meant by *pænitentia* and what by *exomologesis*. One suggestion which readily occurs to the student is that since *pænitentia* and *exomologesis* are clearly differentiated from one another by Cyprian, *exomologesis* must be the confession in words and *pænitentia* the penance in acts. And in support of this it may be noted that on several occasions in the writings of Cyprian the word *exomologesis* is employed to describe some purely verbal confession or statement. Thus in the treatise

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* 10.

<sup>2</sup> *De Lapsis*, 16.

*De Lapsis* Cyprian uses the word *exomologesis* of the Song of the Three Children, and of Daniel's solemn confession in the first year of Darius.<sup>1</sup> Again in the early treatise *Testimonia* he says that while any is in the flesh he ought to make *exomologesis*.<sup>2</sup> The instances given in this passage are instances of confession of sins to God as in the Psalms. Thus it would appear that if the term *exomologesis* were understood to mean a confession in words in the various passages where it occurs in the description of the procedure of discipline, such an employment of the term could be readily paralleled elsewhere in the writings of Cyprian when the procedure of discipline is not in view.

On further examination, however, it will be seen that the explanation of the two terms *pœnitentia* and *exomologesis* thus suggested can hardly be sustained.

First there is the evidence of the order of mention. The confession of sin, or at least some confession of sin, must have preceded the assignment of the term of penance. But on most occasions of mention the order observed is (1) *pœnitentia*, (2) *exomologesis*, (3) imposition of hands. This is so (a) in Cyprian's letter to the clergy,<sup>3</sup> (b) in that to the martyrs and confessors,<sup>4</sup> and (c) in that to the people.<sup>5</sup> Again, in the *De Lapsis* the order of occurrence appears to be the same, though some of the terms employed are different: (1) *expiata delicta*, (2) *exomologesis*, (3) the hand of the *sacerdos*. Thus in all these passages *exomologesis* occupies the second place in the series. But in the letter to the Roman clergy, approving the reconciliation of the lapsed before death, if they have the support of the martyrs, these steps are not so clearly indicated. A hurried summons to the death-bed is contemplated, to which the priest is to respond without waiting for the presence of the bishop, and for which failing even a priest or deacon (*apud presbyterum, apud diaconum*), the lapsed person is to make his *exomologesis* of or for his offence (*exomologesin facere delicti sui*) and to receive the laying on of hands upon his penitence (*in pœnitentiam*). Here the word *exomologesis* is perhaps used to mean all the dying penitent could do. This would certainly include some acknowledgment of offence, and probably also so much of the circumstance of public *exomologesis* as was possible for a dying man in his private house. Thus there might be the expressions of lamentation, and possibly also the sackcloth and ashes. All this would mean that he was now admitted to the status of a penitent, and that being a penitent he was admissible to reconciliation, which was without delay accorded by the imposition of the hand. That this imposition of the hand was the imposition for reconciliation, and not merely for admission to the status of penitent, appears to be implied by the indication that it

<sup>1</sup> *De Lapsis*, 31.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep.* 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Ep.* 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Testimonia*, iii. 114.

<sup>5</sup> *Ep.* 11.

<sup>6</sup> *Ep.* 12.



would enable the person to come to the Lord with the peace which the martyrs in their letters desired to be accorded.

Thus the evidence of the order of mention appears to indicate that the order of occurrence in ordinary cases was (1) *pœnitentia*, (2) *exomologesis*, (3) the imposition of hands for reconciliation and admission to communion; but that in the reference to death-bed penitence there is hardly any distinction between *exomologesis* and *pœnitentia* as regards order of occurrence, the words being apparently used, *exomologesis* to include all the expressions, and *pœnitentia* to indicate the status, of penitence.

It may next be noticed that in the absence of evidence to the contrary it is to be expected that the *exomologesis* of the church of Carthage would continue to be in its main features what it had been when Tertullian described it fifty years before in his *De Pœnitentia*. It then comprised the whole technical apparatus of external penance, of which the main features were:—

- (1) A sordid garb with sackcloth and ashes,
- (2) Fasting,
- (3) Open lamentation,
- (4) Prostration before the presbyters,
- (5) Kneeling before the faithful;

and all this without any definite mention of confession, or particularisation of the offence in words, as part of the *exomologesis*. Also in the African churches more than a hundred years later when S. Augustine wrote, his words imply that the gravity of the offence for which a person might be doing penance could only be inferred from the gravity of the penance. From this it seems to follow that in the time of S. Augustine there was no public confession in words. It would thus appear that the *exomologesis* of the church of Carthage was a public and dramatic course of humiliation, in which the verbal particularisation of the sin did not find place.

While, however, the evidence goes to show that it was not as part of the *exomologesis* that the actual confession, or particularisation of sin, found place; it is clear that some acknowledgment of the sin must have preceded the assignment of the penance for a term suited to the offence. And on this point there is at least one instructive indication. In the case of certain confessions mentioned by S. Cyprian, he says that they were made *apud* *sacerdotes Dei*, before the priests of God, the word *sacerdos* being, however, at this time used of bishops only. The words occur in an interesting passage. He speaks of certain persons who had not in fact lapsed either as *sacrificati* or as *libellatici*, but who had sinned in thought, it would seem by intending to apostatise or by admitting to themselves the possibility of apostasy. These persons

Confession  
*apud sacer-*  
*dotes.*

“making confession of (*confitentes*) this very thing (*i. e.* their sin of thought) to the priests of GOD (*apud sacerdotes Dei*) with grief and with simplicity, make an exomologesis of their conscience, thrust off from them the load of their minds, and seek out a salutary medicine even for slight and moderate wounds, knowing that it is written, ‘God is not mocked.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

It appears, then, that the practice of the day made it easy and natural for a person troubled only by grave sins of purpose in thought to make his confession to a bishop. The statement of Origen that the Penance of the Church was characterised by the showing of the sin to the priest of the Lord, and the seeking from him the remedy, will here be recalled. It appears that both in the Eastern churches represented by Origen, and at Carthage, a person who for grave sins other than capital sought the penance and reconciliation of the Church, would make a confession of his offence or offences to the bishop (or priest?) of the Lord, and would seek from him the remedy. This remedy would presumably be the *pœnitentia* for a “just term.” During the continuance of this status of penance the person would ordinarily make public *exomologesis* before the Church, such *exomologesis* being an ordered course of public humiliation, but probably not including a public confession in the sense of a public particularisation of offence. At the conclusion of the “just term” of the penitential status came the imposition of the hands of the bishop and clergy, such imposition of hands carrying with it the right of communion.

Not the  
modern  
system.

The passage which has been here cited from the *De Lapsis* affords a glimpse into the Christian practice of Carthage in the third century, which has reasonably attracted much notice and has led to some variety of inference. Some controversialists have indeed sought from this passage to establish the prevalence in the time of S. Cyprian of the whole modern system of confession, as now practised in the Latin church; that is to say, of the general prevalence of a system of confession to the priests of the Church, which was private, and which reached to the avowal of venial sins. And no doubt due weight must be given to the statement that the avowal of a grave sin of thought was called for lest God should be mocked. But the whole tenor of the letters and other writings of S. Cyprian shows that so far from there being any general acceptance of the practice of confession, it was with the utmost difficulty that Cyprian could insist upon the necessity of even an apostate accepting the status of a penitent as a condition of reconciliation. And even a slight acquaintance with the Christian literature of the age should preclude the statement that there was anywhere a general practice of confessing what are now called venial sins. The one fact that the confessions spoken of by S. Cyprian were made *apud sacerdotes Dei*, when the word

<sup>1</sup> *De Lapsis*, 28.



*sacerdotes* was used of the bishops only, at once narrows the practice to very strict limits. Nor can it for a moment be supposed that repetitions of Penance would at this time find favour.

While considering the use of the church of Carthage in the matter of confession, penance, and absolution it will be well to refer to a further passage in the *De Lapsis*. Cyprian is addressing the lapsed.

“I entreat you, brethren well-beloved, that each do confess his own sin, while he who has sinned is yet in this world, while his confession may be received, while the satisfaction and remission made by the *sacerdotes* is acceptable with the Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

Reference has already been made to the fact that in the mind of the Church of the early centuries the present action of the Church in retaining or remitting sins was never regarded as necessarily anticipating or foreclosing the judgment of the Lord at the Great Day. It might expect present ratification in heaven, but there was always the judgment to come. Yet those who had not sought reconciliation here could have but a “certain fearful looking for” that judgment to come. S. Cyprian entreats the lapsed that they should seek in this present time within the Church the due order of confession, satisfaction, and remission *per sacerdotes*.

The passages which have here been cited in connexion with the discipline of Penance at Carthage have given some insight into the practice of that Church as regards the ministers of Penance. Cyprian assumes as generally understood that the laying on of hands for the reconciliation of a penitent will not take place in ordinary cases without the bishop. Thus in the case of grave sickness the priest is to respond immediately to the summons of the sick, without waiting for the bishop’s presence (*non expectata præsentia nostra*), it being apparently implied that save for the urgency the bishop’s presence ought to be waited for. Again in the case of those priests who had taken upon themselves to communicate the lapsed, Cyprian complains that they had done so not “reserving to the bishop the honour of his episcopate and chair (*sacerdotii sui et cathedræ*).”

The ministers of Penance.

Reconciliation is normally by the bishop.

It has been noted that in the writings of S. Cyprian the word *sacerdos* must be taken to mean a bishop, and not to include priests who were not bishops. Accordingly when in the *De Lapsis* he writes of confession being made *apud sacerdotes Dei* it is to be understood that such confession was made to a bishop.<sup>2</sup> Similarly when in the next chapter of the same treatise<sup>3</sup> he writes of remission being made *per sacerdotes*, it is again to be understood that bishops were the ministers of such remission. Again, when he writes of conscience being “purged by sacrifice and by the hand of the *sacerdos*, it is the bishop’s hand which must be understood.<sup>4</sup>

Confessions made to the bishop.

<sup>1</sup> *De Lapsis*, 29.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

The presbyters join in the public laying on of hands.

They reconcile in cases of urgency.

A deacon empowered to reconcile in urgent cases.

In the formal act of public reconciliation the bishop was the chief minister, and without him in ordinary cases such reconciliation could not rightly find place. While, however, the bishop was the chief minister of the public reconciliation, the priests yet had their part with him in the ceremonial laying on of hands. Their part finds distinct mention. In his epistles written at this time Cyprian four times<sup>1</sup> mentions the laying on of hands as being by the "bishop and clergy," where "clergy" may mean only presbyters, or may include deacons. In cases of urgency, as has been seen, where the bishop's presence could not be awaited, the priest was to act without the bishop, and was himself to reconcile the penitent. Such death-bed reconciliations effected privately by a priest without the presence of a bishop or the public circumstance of penance, came to hold an important place in the practice of all Western Christendom, and it will be seen how, at a much later date, such practice made it comparatively easy to extend the private system to those in health.

Not the least remarkable feature of the instructions of Cyprian is his provision that in cases of urgent need not only a presbyter but even a deacon is authorised to reconcile the penitent. It will hardly be claimed by any that the deacon when thus acting is acting by virtue of powers inherent in his office. Rather it is the bishop who gives the authority, while the deacon acts on the bishop's behalf. Perhaps the student of Cyprian's instructions will not find it possible in respect of Cyprian's intention to draw any certain distinction between the deacon and the priest. In other words, Cyprian would seem to have regarded the priest as acting on the bishop's behalf not less than the deacon. But between the priest and the deacon the general sense of the Church of the ages has made a clear distinction. A deacon, or other person not a priest, as for instance the lad who conveyed the *Viaticum* to Sarapion, is the instrument of one in whom authority resides. In the priest the mind of the Church has recognised the holder of the same sacred office with the bishop, save for certain features of distinction; and has recognised in the office of the priest a title to exercise the commission of binding and loosing where the provisions of the Church order leave him free to act. The development of the exercise of absolution by the priest in the later ages will call for attention in due course.

The First Council of Carthage under Cyprian, A.D. 251.

The stress of the persecution at Carthage was relaxed before the end of A.D. 250: and it shortly became possible for Cyprian to summon the council to which he had decided to refer the grave questions which had arisen. The council, which was attended by "a large number of bishops," met in A.D. 251. It will be here referred to as the First Council of Carthage under Cyprian. When at last it met the first subject which came before it was one which had not been contemplated. There had arrived from Rome two

<sup>1</sup> *Epp.* 9 (*bis*), 10, 11.



communications of grave importance. Cornelius, who had been elected and consecrated bishop of Rome, forwarded a dispatch announcing his accession to the office. At the same time came from Novatian a letter of protest against the election of Cornelius. Here we have already the personal rivalry which doubtless went for much in the schism which followed.

Notification from Rome of the election of Cornelius

Cyprian did not see fit to lay before the council the offensive charges made against Cornelius: but he did not ask the council to accept the election without inquiry. It was decided to send Caldonius and Fortunatus to Rome with instructions to investigate and report. Proceeding with the business of the lapsed, the council first dealt with the action of Felicissimus the deacon and certain presbyters his associates. Felicissimus had reconciled offenders in the face of the intimation of the bishops that the reconciliation was reserved to a council. It would seem that during the consideration of this matter, which had something of the character of a personal contest, Cyprian did not himself attend the meetings. We do not possess the formal records of the council, but it is clear that the action of Felicissimus was condemned.

Case of Felicissimus.

The general question of the lapsed should now have occupied the council, but meanwhile another matter claimed their attention. Events at Rome had moved rapidly. Two African bishops, Stephen and Pompey, returning from the imperial city, appeared before the council, and notified the regularity of the election of Cornelius. Next came four delegates from Novatian, not only to press the charges against Cornelius, but to announce that Novatian had now been consecrated bishop of Rome. The great schism which will leave its trail across the pages of Church history for centuries was an accomplished fact. Doubtless human infirmity and personal rivalries played their part as ever in this rending of the body of Christ. But it is none the less important to realise that the underlying differences of principle and conviction between the two factions were real and fundamental. Cornelius stood for indulgence, or compromise, or charity, or the mercy of the Lord; Novatian for the accustomed severity, for purity of discipline, for the Divine honour. Cornelius stood for necessary accommodation to present requirements; Novatian for the ancient paths. The schism is in its essentials concerned with the identical questions which are agitating the church of Carthage. On one side men ask: Is the vast army of the lapsed to be driven to despair? On the other rises the question: Are the lapsed by an unholy indulgence to be permitted to enter and corrupt the Church of Christ? Again: Is the bishop empowered by the Lord's commission to reconcile the penitent offender? Or: Is he too greatly daring when he thus anticipates the judgment of the Lord at the great day?

Further advices from Rome.

Novatian a bishop. His schism.

When at last the council at Carthage found itself free to deal with these grave questions, for the consideration of which it had

The council  
deals with  
the lapsed.

Rulings.

been summoned, it is clear that the events at Rome must have added significance and solemnity to their debate. That debate was in fact of great length. It involved much reference to written documents.<sup>1</sup> Cyprian's treatise *On the Lapsed* was read to the council by Cyprian himself. The kindly charity of his tone towards the delinquents must have impressed the assemblage not less than the wisdom of his reserves. The council does not follow his lead entirely. As regards the authority of martyrs, the assembled fathers are found in fact to brush aside the deference which Cyprian has shown to the martyrs throughout. The bishop, and the bishop alone, is to deal with the offenders. But the council would wish the bishop to go farther in the direction of reconciliation than he has yet gone. The actual words of the resolutions of the council are not in our hands, but the substance of them was as follows :—

1. That an individual examination should be held not only of the facts, but further into the motives or inducements which had been presented to the weakness of the *libellatici*.
2. That the lapsed who had not sacrificed should be restored after a considerable term of penance, and after public application to their bishop for restoration.
3. That those who had sacrificed should be restored at the hour of death if they had continued penitent.
4. That such as had refused penance and confession until they were in fear of death should not then be received.<sup>2</sup>

Cyprian  
accepts  
these.

Cyprian is loyal to the council which he has evoked. The decisions arrived at are accepted by him, and carried into practice, and in this investigation they are to be noted as the most important step in the evolution of the Christian discipline which the Decian persecution affords. Henceforward for Carthage (and it will become the recognised position of the Church) all apostates who have done penance may be restored at the hour of death, and this without regard to their holding or not holding the certificates of the martyrs. Also all who have not certainly sacrificed may be restored by the bishop without waiting for the last sickness, so soon as they have performed the due discipline of penance.

Reconciled  
*lapsei* who  
recover  
from sick-  
ness.

One question was bound to arise from these decisions. If lapsed persons admitted to communion at the supposed approach of death were found to recover, what course was then to be pursued with them? Cyprian in his letter to Antonianus answers the question in the only reasonable way. Clearly, as he says with caustic humour, such persons could not "be suffocated or done away with" "as if, because peace is granted only to the dying, it

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* 55, 6 : *Scripturis (diu) ex utraque parte prolatis.*

*Ep.* 54, 3 : *diu multumque tractatu inter nos habito.*

<sup>2</sup> Benson, *Cyprian*, 158.



was necessary that they who had received peace should die.”<sup>1</sup> Their status among the faithful must be recognised.

The decisions arrived at by the “large number of bishops” of the council at Carthage were shortly ratified by another council at Rome.<sup>2</sup> S. Cyprian writes: “Lest perchance the number of bishops in Africa should seem unsatisfactory, we also wrote to Rome to Cornelius our colleague concerning this matter, who himself also holding a council with many bishops, concurred in the same opinion as we had held, with equal gravity and wholesome moderation.”

Council of Rome, A.D. 251.

At this point it may be well to review the course of events in the imperial city. As regards the innovation of admitting the penitent apostate the first indication is found in the awkward and offensive letter which Cyprian had ironically returned.<sup>3</sup> This letter was written in the name of the Roman clergy very shortly after the martyrdom of Fabian in the early months of A.D. 250. In it the judgment is expressed “that if any who may have fallen into their temptation begin to be taken with sickness and do penance for what they have done (*agant pœnitentiam facti*), and desire communion, it should in any wise be granted to them.” The phrase *agant pœnitentiam* must probably be taken as already bearing the technical signification of doing penance rather than of merely feeling penitent, but no steps of any *ordo disciplinæ* are here indicated.

Progress of events at Rome.

First letter of the Roman clergy to Carthage, A.D. 250.

We pass now to a letter of the Roman clergy which, like the first, was sent to Carthage in the interval between the death of Fabian and the appointment of his successor. S. Cyprian speaks of it as a circular epistle addressed not only to Carthage, but to the Churches and brethren throughout the world.<sup>4</sup> This letter (*Ep.* 31), which is characterised by great clearness and purity of style, is further stated by S. Cyprian to have been written by Novatian.<sup>5</sup> The personality of that remarkable man may here claim attention. It was stated when parties became embittered<sup>6</sup> that Novatian had been a Stoic philosopher, that when a catechumen he had been an epileptic, that he had then been exorcised as a demoniac, and that in the seemingly fatal illness which ensued he had been clinically baptized. It was stated that on his recovery he had not cared to follow up his Baptism in accordance

Second letter.

Novatian.

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* 52, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Were there two councils at Rome in A.D. 251? The *Liber Synodicus* speaks of a council attended by eighteen bishops: Eusebius (VI. 43) says of the council which condemned Novatian that sixty bishops were present, and many presbyters and deacons. S. Jerome calls this an Italian council. Ffoulkes conjectures that the Roman synod of eighteen bishops was joined by forty-two more from other parts of Italy before it separated (*Dict. Ant.*, Art. “Rome, Councils of”).

<sup>3</sup> *Ep.* 2.

<sup>4</sup> *per totum mundum . . . ecclesiis omnibus, et universis fratribus.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ep.* 52, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Eusebius, VI. 43, cites a letter of Cornelius to Fabius of Antioch.

with the recognised rule by seeking the seal of confirmation from the bishop (τοῦ τε σφραγισθῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου). It was stated that in view of these antecedents Fabian had been advised not to ordain Novatian; but that he had overruled the advice. The student of history is shy of receiving too readily charges of this nature, which recur with almost systematic regularity where the leaders of factions are concerned. Whatsoever truth may underlie the charges in Novatian's case, he was at the time under review a man of leading influence among the Roman clergy. A cultivated man, who had written several treatises of some ability in excellent Latin; a man tending constitutionally to precision in all things; clear-headed, logical, pedantic, and severe; he was the exact type of man who declines to be moulded by what those around him may regard as the fresh exigencies of times or persons. This being so, it is the more remarkable that in the letter now under notice (*Ep.* 31) he concurs in and becomes the channel of expression of the "moderate" policy most approved by the Roman clergy. His letter may be quoted at some length.

"Desiring to maintain the moderation of the middle course in these matters we for a long time, being indeed many in number ourselves, and acting in concert with some of the bishops who are near to us and within reach, and some whom, placed afar off, the heat of the persecution had driven out from other provinces, have thought that nothing new was to be done before the appointment of a bishop: but we believe that the care of the lapsed must be moderately dealt with; so that, in the meantime, while the grant of a bishop is withheld from us by God, the cause of such as are able to bear the delays of postponement should be kept in suspense; but of such as impending death does not suffer to bear the delay, having repented and professed a detestation of their deeds with frequency;—if with tears, if with groans, if with weeping they have betrayed the signs of a grieving and truly penitent spirit, when there remains, as far as man can tell, no hope of living,—to them finally such cautious and careful help should be ministered, God Himself knowing what He will do with such, and in what way he will poise the weights of His judgment, while we, however, take anxious care that neither ungodly men should praise our smooth facility, nor truly penitent men accuse our severity as cruel."<sup>1</sup>

This letter is written as the expression of the judgment of the Roman clergy. There were many of them, and they had associated themselves with the bishops within reach, and with bishops from the provinces who had come to Rome in the stress of the persecution. As Cyprian was unwilling to take unusual action before the meeting of a council; so the Roman clergy desire to

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* 31.



do nothing before the appointment of a bishop. Only in one case delay was unsuitable. The penitent apostate on the threshold of death must pass from this world either reconciled or unreconciled. Which should it be? Provided that he had done penance (*acta pœnitentia*), had professed his detestation of his fault, and had evidenced the reality of his penitence by tears and groans, relief might be cautiously given. What was covered by the *doing penance*? Was the profession of detestation, together with tears and groans, the same thing as the *exomologesis* required of the sick by Cyprian? How was the relief administered? by any formal laying on of hands or other absolution, or simply by admission to communion? Again, does "cautious and careful help" certainly indicate communion? Here are questions which at once arise, but cannot be too certainly answered. The absolution was presumably accorded in the expectation that it would be ratified by God if the penitence were found acceptable. But the *if* was regarded as serious. "God Himself" knows "what He will do with such."

Roman clergy ready to admit the penitent apostate at death.

There is at this stage no written indication of the deep cleavage of opinion which was shortly to declare itself among the Roman Christians. The clergy write as being of one mind. Who were they? At this time, as we learn from a letter written later by Cornelius to Fabius of Antioch, there were in the Roman Church forty-six priests and seven deacons besides the sub-deacons, acolytes, exorcists, readers, and *ostiarii*. The most influential members of the Christian community in those times of stress were no doubt the men who had shown their readiness to give their life-blood for the faith which was in them. The martyrs or confessors were the heroes of the hour. We shall probably not be wrong in understanding that the aged presbyter Moyses, who had bravely suffered for his Master, and who was clearly at this time a person of much influence, was in a great degree responsible for this letter. Cyprian says that he subscribed it. Also among the presbyters was Maximus, who had been associated with Moyses in his confession. Among the other clergy would be prominent Cornelius, who was shortly to be chosen bishop. To Novatian as a writer of education fell the drafting of the letter. It represents the extreme point in the way of concession to the lapsed which he ever permitted himself to reach. It should not, however, escape notice that while the Roman clergy in this letter make a great step in the direction of concession, the letter contains a paragraph which breathes that stricter spirit which, we may suspect, was more after the heart of Novatian.

Who were the Roman clergy?

"For what is more fitting in time of peace, or more necessary in the conflict of persecution than to maintain the due severity of the Divine vigour? which if any shall have remitted, it is ever a necessary consequence, that he is lost

A paragraph breathing the stricter spirit.

in the shifty course of circumstances, and is carried hither and thither by the various and uncertain gusts of affairs, and the helm of counsel being as it were wrenched from his hands, he will let the ship of the safety of the Church drive upon the rocks; so that it would appear that provision cannot otherwise be made for the safety of the Church than by repelling like adverse waves any who act in despite of her, and that the order of her discipline which has ever been guarded should be maintained like some rudder of safety in a storm. Nor is this judgment now first matured by us, nor have these measures against the wicked of a sudden now occurred to us; but among us this is read as being the ancient severity, the ancient faith, the ancient discipline; since the Apostle would not have published so great praises concerning us in saying 'that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world,'<sup>1</sup> unless already thence that vigour had borrowed the roots of faith for those times; from which praise and glory it would be a high crime to have become degenerate."<sup>2</sup>

This paragraph breathes the very temper of Novatian as he was shortly to display it. It may be surmised that it formed part of his original draft: and that the passage already quoted which made the concession to the dying was introduced by the vote or on the instruction of the majority.

Before leaving this letter it may be noticed that it is remarkable for the insight which it gives into the very different temper of the martyrs and confessors at Rome from that which we have seen to be conspicuous at Carthage.

Confessors at Rome different in temper from those at Carthage.

"You have letters agreeing with our letters from the confessors, whom the dignity of their confession has still shut up here in prison, and whom for the gospel contest their faith has once already crowned in a glorious confession; letters wherein they have maintained the severity of the gospel discipline, and have revoked the unlawful petitions (*illicitas petitiones*) that they might not be a shame to the Church. Unless they had done this, the ruins of gospel discipline would not easily have been restored. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

The Roman church rejects the claim of the confessors.

The Roman church, in fact, meets the claim of prerogative for the confessors with a deaf ear. The confessors themselves withdraw the petitions which once they had made as *illicit*, and a source of shame to the Church; and the whole course of the Roman discipline at this period simply ignores the possibility of any intervention on the part of the martyrs. So far as can be gathered, there was at Rome no counterpart in this matter to the experience of Carthage. There was nothing corresponding to the torrent of claims which poured in on Cyprian from the lapsed: and nothing corresponding to the immoderate assumptions of

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



prerogative of confessors like Lucian. The same conclusion is indicated by the fact that Celerinus, himself a confessor at Rome, though apparently a Carthaginian, seeks from Lucian, a Carthaginian confessor, the restoration to the peace of the Church of his two sisters Etecura (Numeria) and Candida, who had lapsed at Rome.<sup>1</sup> If, then, it is to be concluded that the intervention of the martyrs had not to be seriously reckoned with at Rome, this constitutes a very important element of difference in the conditions existing on the opposite shores of the Mediterranean.

Case of  
Etecura  
and  
Candida.

It was not long before the divergence of feeling which existed at Rome found expression. Respite from persecution came to the Church when the conflict between Decius and Valens was in course. And it was judged that with that respite should come the appointment of a bishop of Rome. Cornelius was elected, was overborne to acceptance, and was consecrated by no less than sixteen bishops in March A.D. 251. As regards the lapsed he was identified with the kindlier or more indulgent policy. There is nothing to indicate that he was a man of marked distinction. He was, however, a Roman of the Romans, a member of the Cornelian gens. He appears to have been a worthy man, of but moderate competence for his high leadership. He had risen quietly through every order and office in the Church. Some declared that he was a libellatic: others that he had communicated with the lapsed. For such charges there was probably little enough ground.

Cornelius  
elected and  
consecrated,  
A.D. 251.

Novatian broke out into antagonism at once. It may be true enough, as Cornelius stated to Fabius, that Novatian had himself long been ambitious of the episcopate (*πρόπαλαι ὀρεγόμενος τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς*).<sup>2</sup> He had some conspicuous abilities. He may have thought that he was clearly marked out for the office when the time came to fill it. Is it cynical to wonder whether if he had been elected he would ever have thought it necessary to depart from the "large-hearted counsel for a widely spread offence" which his letter had indicated? But with the election of Cornelius comes conflict. At first Novatian seeks to have Cornelius put aside. It is no easy task. A majority of the clergy have concurred in the election: sixteen bishops have co-operated in the consecration. None the less Novatian develops an extraordinary energy of protest. To the great bishops beyond the seas he sends his own account of the situation at Rome; of the circumstances of the election; of the character of Cornelius. As we have seen his letters reached Cyprian at the same time as the advices sent by Cornelius of his consecration. He represents Cornelius as a libellatic, as having communicated with the lapsed, as canonically incapable of advancement to the episcopate. He is not sparing of his charges. Cyprian demurs to his tone, and sets his communication aside.

Antagon-  
ism of  
Novatian.

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* 21.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, *H.E.*, VI. 43.

Schismatic  
consecra-  
tion of  
Novatian.

The next step which it is important to note is the schismatic consecration of Novatian by three of the country bishops. A grotesque story comes down to us that these officiating bishops had first been reduced to a state of intoxication. It is doubtless as little worthy of credit as is the Nag's Head fable of our own country regarding the consecration of Archbishop Parker. There was probably no great difficulty in obtaining the services of three bishops who felt strongly on the subject of discipline, when they were asked to save the situation in Rome by consecrating a man so highly regarded as Novatian. There is at any rate here no question as to the fact of the consecration. Novatian becomes an anti-pope.

Novatian-  
ism.

With the consecration of Novatian the great Novatianist schism takes form. When the student learns the continued existence for some four centuries of an important Christian community, which in its more flourishing days maintained a bishop and his following in every prominent city of the empire from Spain to Pontus, and which claimed to be the only Catholic Church; his first sentiment is likely to be one of wonder that a schism which differed from the Catholic Church in no one essential point of doctrine, and which had as its leader a man of no great human attractiveness, should thus be able to gather round it almost universally a formidable following, and often to become a serious menace to the claims of the Catholic body. The explanation appears to be that to a very large number of Christian people the Church which maintained the more severe ideal of discipline seemed to be the Church of their fathers, the Church most worthy of the Catholic name. Here they found "the ancient severity, the ancient faith, the ancient discipline," of which Novatian had written in the name of the Roman clergy in the days before the schism. The starting of a new Church on lines of modern development was so far from being the intention of these men that it was exactly what they existed to protest against. Their position had some analogies with that of the Evangelical party in England in view of the advance of the Tractarian movement. Whatever the new teachers might adduce in the way of scriptural authority or primitive precedents, their ways seemed new ways to the men in possession, and not the ways of the honoured generations whom they could bear in mind. The whole sullen strength of a prejudiced conservatism stood here for Novatian rather than for Cornelius and Cyprian. Novatianism did not spring from Novatian. He but gave expression and cohesion to a widely diffused body of opinion which was of no recent growth. It was a body of opinion which thirty years before had with Hippolytus as its mouthpiece joined issue with Callistus. It was a body of opinion which had given substance to the Montanist perversion. It was at one in temper with that rigorist section of the Christian

*Stare super  
antiquas  
vias.*



community to which Hermas had referred at the end of the first century.

For the history of the Christian penitential discipline the Novatianist schism has a high importance. It marks the last stand made, a stand which now had to be made in schism, on behalf of that age-long policy of severity on earth, which would not suffer the Church to exercise her prerogative of remission in the cases of the capital sins, but referred them to the judgment of the Lord in the Great Day. Henceforth the Catholic Church determines in effect that this distinction has no essential justification, and may no longer stand. Her general position is not inaptly expressed in the words of the writer of the *Contra Novatianum*.

The last stand for the sterner discipline.

The Catholic Church now claims her full prerogative.

“No sin, which it has not been possible to remit here, will find the possibility of remission hereafter. For here, as the Lord hath said, sins are either bound or loosed: in the future there will be nought else but reward or condemnation. For every man who here is rightly repelled cannot be made elect or judged worthy for the future.”<sup>1</sup>

The writer allows that there is one form of sin, the sin against the Holy Ghost, of which our Lord spake solemn words, placing such sin outside forgiveness. But apart from this sin God places no reserve on the prerogative of the Church of Christ. “Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.” God has His conditions. It would seem to be with Him an immutable law that He will forgive no impenitent sinner. The Church may make her conditions. Thus she may require, as Cyprian seems to have required, (1) the status of the penitent following confession of sin, (2) the exercise of exomologesis, and (3) formal absolution, before the sinner is restored to communion. But for all pardonable sins the Church claims that their pardon is within the scope of her prerogative.

In April A.D. 252 the imperial throne was ascended by Gallus II, who associated with himself his son Volusianus. A fresh outburst of persecution was anticipated. At Rome Cornelius was arraigned, and was staunch in his confession of his Lord. He carried with him the Roman Christians generally. Cyprian was able to write: “As with you there is one mind and one voice, the whole Roman church has confessed.” Among the confessors were many of those who had lapsed under Decius. They were acknowledged as restored by their present steadfastness. S. Cyprian writes:—

Accession of Gallus II. Fresh persecution apprehended

Steadfastness at Rome.

“How many lapsed were then restored by a glorious confession! They bravely stood, and by the very suffering

<sup>1</sup> For the *Contra Novatianum*, see p. 215.

of repentance were made braver for the battle, that it might appear that lately they had been taken at unawares, and had trembled at the fear of a new and unaccustomed thing, but that they had afterwards returned to themselves; that true faith and their strength, gathered from the fear of God, had constantly and firmly strengthened them to all endurance; and that now they do not stand for pardon of their crime but for the crown of their suffering.”<sup>1</sup>

Cornelius, however, and presumably the other brethren, do not appear to have been visited with very grave penalties. Fabian two years before had been put to death: but Cornelius was only exiled to Centumcellæ (Civita Vecchia), where he died.<sup>2</sup>

Cyprian  
encourages  
his flock at  
Carthage.

Meanwhile, at Carthage, Cyprian is marshalling his forces to meet the expected attack. He encourages his flock to stand firm. In his letter to the people of Thibaris he reminds them that in persecutions are given the crowns of faith: that the heavens are open to martyrs. He decides to remain with his people as on this occasion the better course.

Second  
Council of  
Carthage  
under  
Cyprian,  
A.D. 252,

In view of the coming persecution a council, which we will call the Second Council of Carthage under Cyprian, was summoned, and arrived at a decision of no little moment. Starting from the decision arrived at in the council of the year before and now generally acted upon, that the penitent lapsed might be reconciled in sickness, the council decides that the approach of persecution creates an analogous situation, which calls for the present reconciliation of all the penitent lapsed. This is an immense stride forward in concession. The council writes:—

reconciles  
all the  
penitent  
lapsed.

“But now, when we see that the day of another trouble is again beginning to draw near, and are admonished by frequent and repeated intimations that we should be prepared and armed for the struggle which the enemy announces to us; that we should also prepare the people committed to us by divine condescension by our exhortations, and gather together from all parts all the soldiers of Christ who desire arms, and are anxious for the battle within the Lord’s camp;—under the compulsion of this necessity we have decided that peace is to be given to those who have not withdrawn from the Church of the Lord, but have not ceased from the first day of their lapse to repent, and to lament, and to beseech the Lord; and (have decided) that they ought to be armed and equipped for the battle which is at hand.”<sup>3</sup>

This action of the Second Council of Carthage under Cyprian in the year A.D. 252 has perhaps hardly received adequate attention.

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* 57.

<sup>2</sup> The Liberian Catalogue has: *Centumcellas expulsus, ibi cum gloria dormitionem recepit.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ep.* 54.



By one comprehensive ordinance it admits to present reconciliation the whole number of the penitent lapsed; not only libellatics, not only the sick among those who had sacrificed, but all without exception, so long as they were penitent; *sacrificati*, *thurificati*, *libellatici* alike. The gate of the citadel of the Lord is thrown open to all the penitent before the great contest begins. The lapsed are no longer bidden to reinstate themselves by gaining the martyrs' crown. They are reinstated by the Church that they may the better find the grace to gain that crown. It will be remembered that the revelation of mercy which Hermas claimed to have received was similarly made in view of an imminent persecution, apparently in the early years of Trajan.

It is interesting to note the rapidity of the strides which have been taken in the maturing of the new principles of discipline. This council sat in May A.D. 252. The Decian persecution had begun in January A.D. 250. Thus in the brief period of two and a half years Cyprian and the church of Carthage had advanced from an uncompromising *non possumus* attitude to the present reconciliation of the whole number of the lapsed. The steps may be recalled. First, Cyprian allows the accordance of communion to the penitent lapsed when death is approaching, provided that the person hold the indulgence of a martyr. Next, in the first council (A.D. 251) communion is accorded to the dying, whether he hold a martyr's indulgence or not. Also the libellatic is admitted to communion so soon as his assigned period of penance is concluded. Now in this second council in the face of persecution threatening death none of the penitent are repelled.

Rapidity  
of conces-  
sions in 2½  
years.

The last step, though it might seem to follow logically from the reconciliation on the point of death already conceded, was none the less practically the most important step yet taken. It gathered in by present action the hundreds, it would seem the thousands, of the lapsed. It dared to exercise in the name and power of the Lord a far-reaching mercy. In this it created a precedent from which there would be no effective return. For the next seventy years there will be discernible a tendency in many parts of the Church to tighten up the discipline again. But the Church has learned to claim that the keys of her Lord's commission are in her hands to loose as well as to bind, and when the need arises she will dare to greatly use them in His name.

It does not appear that the persecution under Gallus, which was so keenly apprehended, proved in reality to be very severe. At Rome, as has been noticed, Cornelius was merely exiled to Centumcellæ (Civita Vecchia), where he died. The later traditions of a martyrdom in blood are untrustworthy.<sup>1</sup> Cyprian in his letter to Cornelius after the persecution (*Ep.* 57) expresses high commendation of other Roman confessors, noticing that

Persecu-  
tion under  
Gallus not  
in fact  
severe.

<sup>1</sup> Aubé, B., *L'Église et l'État* (Paris, 1885), pp. 290 sqq.

among them were some lapsed persons who thus by a glorious confession restored themselves. But the persecution does not seem to have been comparable in violence with that under Decius. At Carthage the bishops of the council of A.D. 252 anticipated a persecution "more grievous and sharper" than the last.<sup>1</sup> Similarly Cyprian, writing to the people of Thibaris, bids them not to suppose that the coming onslaught would be only like that which was past: "a graver and more fierce conflict is now imminent."<sup>2</sup> But the event proved otherwise. A certain number of Christians seem to have been arraigned, and to have suffered or failed; but history has no record of raging persecution.

S. Cyprian  
on par-  
ticular  
points.  
(a) Effect  
of penance  
and recon-  
ciliation  
before GOD.

Some inquiry may here be made as to the attitude of S. Cyprian on particular points. And first as to the views entertained by him of the effect before the throne of GOD of penance and reconciliation in the Church on earth.

In his letter to Antonianus (*Ep.* 52), which may be assigned to A.D. 252, Cyprian writes:—

"For neither do we prejudge the judgment of the Lord otherwise than that if He shall find the penitence of the sinner full and sound, He will then ratify what shall have been here determined by us."

An essential for the Divine forgiveness is thus adequate penitence; and in judging of adequate penitence the earthly minister may be at fault.

"For if any have deluded us by a simulation of penitence, GOD, Who is not mocked, and Who searches the heart of man, will judge of such matters as we have ill perceived; and will amend the sentence of His servants."

It appears to be implied that if the penitence be adequate, the ratification by GOD of the sentence of the Church may be assumed.

In his treatise *On the Lapsed* Cyprian dwells at some length on the false peace of those who are too readily admitted to communion after lapse. The result of such precipitation is only that penitence is driven forth from their breasts.<sup>3</sup> Such facility only hinders from salvation.<sup>4</sup> Cyprian is clear that after all it is only GOD, not man, who can pardon.

"Let none mistake: let none deceive himself. GOD alone can exercise mercy. For such sins as are committed against Himself,<sup>5</sup> only He Who has borne our sins, Who has suffered grief for us, only He Whom GOD surrendered for our sins, only He can afford pardon. Man cannot be greater than GOD: nor can the servant by his indulgence remit or grant what is in the matter of the graver offence (*delicto graviore*) committed against the Lord."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* 54: *pugnam non talem qualis fuit, sed graviores multo et acriorem.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ep.* 56: *Nec putemus talia esse quæ veniunt qualia fuerunt illa quæ transierunt: gravior nunc et ferocior pugna imminet.*

<sup>3</sup> *De Lapsis*, 15.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 126.

<sup>6</sup> *De Lapsis*, 17.



The argument is that it is of no service, but rather a definite hindrance, to assume to accord reconciliation in the Church when the conditions of the Divine forgiveness have not been fulfilled.

“The martyrs may order something to be done; but if what they order be not written in the law of the Lord, we must first know that they have obtained what they ask from God, and then do what they command.”

Even the martyrs under the altar are bidden to be patient.<sup>1</sup>

To S. Cyprian it is quite clear that for the Divine forgiveness the penitence must be adequate. And, like S. Ambrose and S. Pacian in the fourth century, he has something to say about the penitence of people, who, while professing to do penance, are leading unrestrained lives.

“Do we suppose that he is lamenting with all his heart, and entreating the Lord with fasting and with weeping and with mourning, who from the first day of his offence daily frequents the baths in the company of women, who feeds at rich banquets, and is puffed out with gluttonous excess. . . .”<sup>2</sup>

Cyprian was from the first willing to assign some weight to the intervention of the martyrs. He had done so in his first proclaimed concession in which he permitted the reconciliation and communion of the penitent lapsed on the approach of death, provided he held a martyr's *libellus*, and not otherwise. The First Council of Carthage under Cyprian in A.D. 251 removed this condition, and frankly dispensed with martyrs altogether. The Roman church consistently did the same throughout.

It has been seen also that Cyprian regarded as of great value confession, satisfaction, and priestly remission of sin in this life. These were acceptable to God (*dum satisfactio et remissio per sacerdotes apud Dominum grata est*).<sup>3</sup> If it was wrong to assume that the ministrations of the Church could prejudice or override the Divine sentence, Cyprian yet had no doubt of the real grace of pardon accorded to the rightly disposed in the remission by the bishops (*sacerdotes*).

A remarkable passage in view of later quantitative teaching as to merits and indulgences is to be found in the closing paragraph of the *De Lapsis* :—

“He can mercifully pardon the penitent, the toiler, the suppliant. He can carry to his credit (*in acceptum referre*) whatsoever the martyrs have sought, and the bishops (*sacerdotes*) wrought for such as these.”<sup>4</sup>

The phrase *in acceptum referre alicui* is the technical phrase of the accountant, signifying *to carry over to the credit side, to place to one's credit*.<sup>5</sup> Thus, if reconciliation in the Church is of no

<sup>1</sup> *De Lapsis*, 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>5</sup> Lewis and Short give the following references: Cic. *Verr.* 1, 36, 57; id. *Rosc. Com.* 2; id. *Phil.* 2, 16; id. *Cæc.* 6, 17; Hor. *Ep.* 2. 1, 234 (opp. *datum* or *expensum*).

service without the adequate penitence which alone can find remission before the throne of GOD; when that penitence is found, the intervention of the martyrs and the absolution of the bishops are alike reckoned as affording an accession of grace or favour, which GOD will carry to the credit account of the penitent.

(b) Arguments from accepted premises.

In the history of the penitential discipline of the Church not the least remarkable indications of change of attitude are to be found in the arguments from accepted premises used at different times. To Tertullian the argument was simple, that as no one would expect the Church to reconcile apostates or homicides, so neither should she reconcile adulterers.<sup>1</sup> To Cyprian<sup>2</sup> it was no less obvious to argue that as the Church reconciled adulterers without detriment to the prevalence of virginity and the glory of continence, so she could reconcile the lapsed without detriment to the steadfastness of the martyrs. No better evidence need be asked that in Tertullian's time apostates and homicides were not reconciled: or that in Cyprian's time adulterers were reconciled.

(c) Development of Cyprian's disciplinary views.

The development of Cyprian's disciplinary views as time went on is worthy of notice. Writing to Antonianus shortly after the schism of Novatian he pointed out that at a former time some of his predecessors among the African bishops, doubtless in the time of the Callistine controversy, had refused to reconcile adulterers, but that they had not on that account broken the unity of the Catholic Church. This conduct had then appeared to him to be sound in principle.

“While the bond of concord remains, and the undivided sacrament of the Catholic Church endures, every bishop disposes and directs his own acts, and will have to give account of his purposes to the Lord.”<sup>3</sup>

At this time (A.D. 251), accordingly, Cyprian would have been content if the bishops exercising rigorist discipline within their own sees had recognised and remained in communion with other bishops who were prepared to make concessions. But the purist attitude of the Novatian schismatics, who declined to acknowledge that any but the members of their own sect were Catholic Christians, was bound to bring its consequences. By A.D. 254 Cyprian is writing to Stephen that Marcianus of Arles who holds the “heretical assumption” of Novatian, and has departed from the unity of the Catholic Church, must be deposed, and another bishop elected in his room.<sup>4</sup> The development was inevitable, but it was a considerable development.

(d) Case of the lapsed clergy.

A somewhat perplexing question arose out of the reconciliation of the lapsed. If a bishop or a presbyter had lapsed, and then repented and found reconciliation, was he to be restored not

<sup>1</sup> *De Pudicitia*, C. v.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep.* 52, 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep.* 52, 20.

<sup>4</sup> *Ep.* 67.



only to his place among the faithful, but to the exercise of his office? To this question the common sentiment seems to have given everywhere practically the same answer. The bishop or presbyter might be received among the faithful, but might not again exercise his ministry. Some interesting cases may be noticed.

Trophimus,<sup>1</sup> an Italian bishop (*sacerdos*), seems to have been a *thurificatus*. He had lapsed, that is to say, by the action of offering incense in pagan worship. Cyprian's letter, explaining the matter to Antonianus probably, if not certainly, implies this.<sup>2</sup> Cornelius reconciled Trophimus after penitence: and in so doing markedly exceeded the concessions indicated in the letters of the Roman clergy written before his consecration. Novatian protested: and his protest was not without justification. Cyprian's apology for the action of Cornelius is noteworthy. He says:—

“And not so much Trophimus, as a very great number of brethren who had been with Trophimus, were admitted into the Church of the Lord, who would not all have returned to the Church unless they had come in the company of Trophimus. Accordingly the matter being considered there with the assistance of several colleagues, Trophimus was received, for whom the return of the brethren, and salvation restored to many, made atonement.”<sup>3</sup>

Here is an entirely novel ground for the exercise of the remitting power of the Church. That power may be used as a reward for those “who turn many to righteousness.” Once more the remitting office is used according to the leading of circumstances. It has already been suggested in these pages that when the Lord delivered such power into the hands of men it might well be because its exercise would require to be modified from time to time according to circumstances. Cornelius then reconciled Trophimus in part at least because of his following. But he only admitted him to lay communion. Trophimus was not restored to his ministries as a *sacerdos*.

Basilides and Martialis were Spanish bishops, who had become libellatics under persecution (c. A.D. 251). Their sees were Merida and Leon with Astorga, though it cannot be determined from Cyprian's epistle (68) who was the bishop of which see. After their lapse their places were filled by Sabinus and Felix. Some time later (A.D. 254) the two lapsed bishops visited Rome, and sought restoration from Stephen, who was then bishop of Rome. Stephen was lax enough to attempt such restoration: and some bishops communicated with the two offenders as being now restored. The next incident recorded is the intervention of Felix a presbyter in the interest of the Christian community of Leon and Astorga, and of Ælius a deacon for that of Merida. Felix

<sup>1</sup> Or Trofimius.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep.* 52, 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep.* 52.

and Ælius presented an appeal to Cyprian against the action of Stephen. The appeal is incidentally noteworthy as indicating the relative importance of Cyprian and his see. As regards Basilides and Martialis, a council of Carthage (4th under Cyprian), which met in the autumn of A.D. 254, decided that

“such persons attempt to claim for themselves the episcopate in vain; since it is evident that men of that kind may neither rule over the Church of Christ, nor ought to offer sacrifices to God, especially since Cornelius also, our colleague, a peaceable and righteous priest (*sacerdos*) and moreover honoured by the condescension of the Lord with martyrdom, long ago decreed with us, and with all the bishops appointed throughout the whole world, that men of this sort might indeed be admitted to the performance of penance, but were prohibited from the ordination of the clergy, and from the priestly (*sacerdotali*) honour.”<sup>1</sup>

The bishops of Cyprian's council thus claim to array against Stephen along with themselves Stephen's own predecessor Cornelius, and “all the bishops established throughout the whole world (*cum omnibus omnino episcopis in toto mundo constitutis*).” Such bishops were agreed that lapsed persons might be admitted to do penance. The phrase *ad agendam pœnitentiam* is the already technical phrase for the public penance of the Church: the phrase *posse admitti* seems to indicate a formal admission to this public penance, from a definite point of time. It is noteworthy that bishops are thus admitted to penance. Certainly in the following century this would not be so. In S. Basil's *Canonical Epistles*, can. 32, it is ruled that clerks guilty of deadly offences are to be degraded but not repelled from lay communion. The principle is that an offender is not to be punished doubly for the same offence. So, too, the *Apostolical Canons* (c. 24). These also indicate (cc. 64, 65) that the same offence was visited in the case of a clerk with deposition (*καθαρείσθω*), in the case of a layman with excommunication and penance (*ἀφοριζέσθω*).

(e) Cyprian strikes out principles of action.

Cyprian's course becomes clearer before him as he goes. He strikes out lucid principles of action. Among these not the least noteworthy is the statement of the true episcopal ideal in the exercise of discipline which is found in a letter to Cornelius, bishop of Rome, written in A.D. 252.

“For our own part it befits our conscience, dearest brother, to strive that none should perish from out the Church by our fault; but if any one of his own accord and by his own sin should perish, and should be unwilling to repent and to return to the Church, that we who are anxious for their well-being should be blameless in the day of judgment.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 55.



Here, then, is a controlling canon of episcopal conduct in the exercise of the penitential discipline entrusted to the bishops by the Church. The bishop is to see to it that none perish from out the Church by his (the bishop's) fault. This principle has in fact been familiar with the Catholic bishops of all later history : but it is to be remembered that when the principle was thus enunciated by Cyprian it was a position newly taken up. Cyprian was at the same time not less alive to the perils of mere laxity than were the sterner leaders of rigorism. In this same letter (55) he writes :—

“For neither are the corrupt members (*putramina*, or if *putamina*, husks) so to be gathered in that those which are whole and sound should be injured : nor is the pastor serviceable or wise, who thus admits diseases or tainted sheep into the flock in such sort that he contaminates the whole flock by the infliction of a clinging evil.”

It has been shown how in the first two centuries the Church was more concerned to exercise her prerogative of binding than that of loosing : and that the soundness of the Christian body appealed to her in more convincing tones than the needs of the individual backslider, who might be left to the after mercies of the Lord. In the brief years of the Decian persecution, and its teeming multitudes of lapsed Christians, the needs of the lapsed have asserted themselves as never before, and the prerogative of loosing takes a place in the Christian economy which it must retain : but the soundness of the body is still before Cyprian as a controlling necessity which requires the continued exercise of the prerogative of binding.

In his epistle to Antonianus (*Ep.* 52) to which references have already been made, Cyprian gives two intimations as to the practice of the Novatianist schism which are of considerable interest. Novatianist practice.

Of these the first is that notwithstanding the strict Novatianist principle of excluding from reconciliation all capital offenders, certain reconciled adulterers were suffered in the Novatianist body.

“Let him separate the fraudulent and adulterers from his side and from his company, since the case of an adulterer is far graver and worse than that of a libellatic, because the latter has sinned by compulsion, the former voluntarily. . . . And yet even to these persons repentance is granted and the hope of lamenting and atoning is left. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

The old rigorist principle was that for the three capital sins of apostasy, impurity, and bloodshed there was no remission in the Church on earth. It has been seen how sternly Tertullian maintained this principle. And the Novatianist sect will in fact exist

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* 52, 26.

to maintain it for some centuries to come. But, as has been seen, after the concession of Callistus the Catholic Church had reconciled the penitent adulterer. It may be inferred that in the Roman church, of which Novatian had been a prominent presbyter, there were at least some reconciled adulterers, who were in full communion. It would have been so during all the years of Novatian's ministry in the Catholic Church. When the great struggle came on the question of the lapsed, and men took sides, it may be assumed that persons who had long been in unquestioned communion would not be challenged on a point which was not immediately at issue, and that Novatian did not excommunicate them. Whether he was prepared to extend reconciliation to new offenders in the matter of adultery does not certainly appear. In the Novatianist sect of later days reconciliation was strictly barred to all capital offenders.

The other notice of Novatianist practice in S. Cyprian's letter shows that Novatian encouraged the penance of the lapsed while withholding reconciliation upon earth. At the close of the fourth century it will be seen from the evidence of S. Pacian in Spain and of S. Ambrose at Milan that the Novatianists did not admit capital offenders to penance at all. In the first beginnings of Novatianism it was otherwise.

S. Cyprian writes :—

“O futile and vain tradition of heretical institution, to exhort to the penance of satisfaction and to take away the remedy from the satisfaction; to say to our brethren, Mourn and shed tears, and groan day and night and toil much and often for the washing away and purging of your sin; but after all this thou shalt die outside the pale of the Church.”<sup>1</sup>

It is clear from this passage that Novatian encouraged the practice of penance, presumably with a view to the Divine forgiveness hereafter: but his attitude would not much appeal to the penitent offender, and it is probable that the practice died out from sheer lack of material.

The notices of S. Cyprian may here close. Some writings of the time with which he had no connexion may next be noticed.

Of interest in the great disciplinary contest of the third century are two short treatises known as the *Ad Novatianum* and the *Contra Novatianum*.

The *Ad  
Novatia-  
num*.

The *Ad Novatianum* is a certainly contemporary treatise to which an approximate date may readily be given. Reference is made (1) to the Decian persecution, and (2) also to a second conflict (*secundo prælio*) of recent occurrence (*nunc nuper*). This would be the persecution under Gallus. Yet subsequently the penitent lapsed have been doing penance for a considerable time (*per longam temporum seriem*). Allowing three years for this, Harnack

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* 52, 28.



arrives at A.D. 255 as the earliest admissible date.<sup>1</sup> The persecution of Valerius, which is not yet begun, gives the later limit as A.D. 258. The writer is a responsible bishop questioning "what I ought to do" (*quidnam agere debeam*) as regards the lapsed. Harnack with much probability indicates Xystus (Sixtus) II, who was bishop of Rome for eleven months and six days in A.D. 257–258.<sup>2</sup>

The schism of Novatian is an established fact, and Novatian is now styled a heretic (*hæreticus Novatianus*). Separated from the Church "he hurls back his charges upon us." If he had remained in Christ's Church he might have been a precious vessel. The writer recalls how some of those who had lapsed in their first contest, and whom the Novatianists would readily call "wood, hay, and stubble," were in a second encounter able to give up their lives, and so to conquer. How glorious, how dear to the Lord are these!

The Lord is of great compassion,

"Yet thou, O Novatian, dost judge and proclaim that the lapsed have no hope of peace and mercy."

The writer condemns this position of Novatian with much severity as arrogant and impious. In his concluding paragraph he exhorts to full confession (*plenam confessionem*—*oratio illa exomologeseos plena*); to full satisfaction (*plenis satisfactionibus*) and a penitence or penance over which the angels may rejoice; inasmuch as the gate of forgiveness lies open (*indulgentiæ aditus patet*). Here, then, is the accepted practice of the Catholic Church to which is found in formal antagonism the unyielding rigorism of the separated Novatianist schism.

The *Contra Novatianum* is a writing which has usually been assigned to a later date. It appears as *Qu. cii.* of the *Quæstiones veteris et novi Testamenti*, which are published in the works of S. Augustine (*P. L.*, XXXV. 2303) as having been once by some assigned to S. Augustine, though no longer so assigned. The Benedictines are able to refer some of these *Quæstiones* to the days of Damasus (pope A.D. 366–384). It does not, however, appear probable that all the material is of one date. The *Contra Novatianum* looks like a controversial tract against Novatian fitted on to a piece of scriptural exegesis. It has features which seem to point to a date contemporary with Novatian. (1) The repeated addresses in the second person would be more naturally understood as being actually aimed at him in his lifetime than as a rhetorical apostrophe written more than a hundred years after his death: and it is remarkable that the attacks, though often varied to the third person are never diverted from Novatian personally

The *Contra Novatianum*.

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Eine bisher nicht erkannte Schrift des Papstes Sixtus II vom Jahre, 257–8*, in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Bd. XIII.

<sup>2</sup> For the difficulties of this identification see Abp. Benson, *Cyprian*, p. 560.

to Novatianists or the Novatianist church.<sup>1</sup> And not only is Novatian thus personally addressed, but an appeal is made to his personal consciousness:—

“I call to witness the conscience of Novatian, who is always accusing us, whether he is sure that all those are saints, whom he has in his company: but he is angry with us to such an extent that he denies that we are Christians at all.”

This appeal is only intelligible on the understanding that Novatian was living, and could be thus appealed to. (2) Also the position which this tract indicates as the position adopted by Novatian towards apostates is not the position which history finds in Novatianism in the second half of the fourth century. Novatian is here shown as prescribing for the lapsed a lifelong penance without the hope of reconciliation before death. This agrees with the testimony of S. Cyprian already noticed. But Novatianism at the close of the fourth century does not appear to have admitted penance anywhere, at least in the West, for capital sins, and only in some places to have admitted penance at all. The evidence of S. Pacian, and of S. Ambrose on this point is given elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> (3) A third indication of date is the appeal to the practice of current persecutions as concerned only with the profession of Christianity. For this reference a date contemporary with Novatian would be most suitable.

The conclusion appears to be indicated that the controversial tract is of the time of Novatian. It would seem to have been fitted into his own framework by the compiler of the *Quæstiones*.<sup>3</sup>

As against Novatian the writer contends that not only penance but forgiveness is available for sinners. To Novatian is ascribed the

“impiously framed assertion by which he inverts the meaning of the words of the Lord. . . . *Whosoever shall deny Me, I also will deny him*, as if they meant that if any Christian

<sup>1</sup> *Sed tu hoc astruis, ut tibi hoc defendere videaris* (2311).

*Nunc elige, Novatiane, de quibus vis dictum* (2307).

*Sed quia tu, Novatiane, dolose hoc profiteris . . . agendam pœnitentiam dicis* (2310).

<sup>2</sup> At Constantinople the evidence of Socrates represents the Novatianist bishop Acesius in the time of Constantine (A.D. 325) as stating that capital offenders should not be held worthy of the communion of the Divine mysteries, but that they should be incited to repentance (*μετανοίαν*); that their hope was to receive pardon not from the priests but from God.

<sup>3</sup> Most of the above was written some years before the writer became acquainted with the important monograph of Dr. Harnack, *Der pseudo-Augustinische Traktat Contra Novatianum in Abhandlungen Alexander von Oettingen zum siebenzigsten Geburtstag gewidmet* (Munich, 1898). Dr. Harnack points out the significance of (1) and (3) as indicating a writer contemporary with Novatian; but notes also several features which are characteristic of the writer or compiler of the *Quæstiones*. He decides on the whole for the authorship of the latter, whom he identifies with Ambrosiaster.



shall deny Him under whatsoever circumstances, he cannot now return, or if he return, can in no wise find acceptance."

Novatian's position is that an apostate is to be admitted to penance but denied reconciliation. The writer re-asserts the contention of Cyprian that if penance be accorded, the fruit of penance must not be denied. Novatian is understood to recommend penance with a view to the Divine mercy hereafter. But here the writer accuses him of guile. For Novatian is fond of quoting the words of our Lord that those who deny Him on earth will be themselves denied in the presence of the angels of God in heaven; and he farther identifies apostasy with the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is not to find forgiveness either here or hereafter. On these premises of what service can penance be? The writer denies that either reference necessarily involves a lapsed person. That sin against the Holy Ghost which is not to be forgiven hereafter cannot of course be forgiven here. But all sin which can find pardon hereafter can by the Lord's provision find pardon here. A passage embodying this principle has already been cited. It is the newly assumed standpoint of the Catholic Church, attained with confidence for the first time after the Decian persecution. The Church is prepared to reconcile here upon earth all whom her Lord is prepared to reconcile hereafter.

Novatian is said to deny that fornication after Baptism should find forgiveness. This may seem to be inconsistent with the practice in the time of Cyprian, who represents Novatian as suffering persons who had sinned by adultery. But the explanation may be that Novatian while maintaining generally the principle that the three capital sins were not within the scope of the reconciliation of the Church, did not go out of his way to excommunicate those who had been reconciled in former time.

Several references are made to Holy Scripture to illustrate the Divine forgiveness of grave sins. S. Paul is claimed as recognising the remission after penitence of sins of impurity, and the epistle to the church of Thyatira in Rev. ii. as admitting penance and its fruit after idolatry. The writer distinguishes between the forgiveness in Baptism and that in Penance. For the first forgiveness no penance is required. After Baptism forgiveness may be attained, not gratuitously, but through groaning and weeping.

Novatian's position as regards the lapsed is thus expressed:—

"Nor do I deny that penance is to be done for idolatry committed: but I do not care to accord remission; because the crime must find remission from Him against Whom it was committed."

The recurrence of this familiar formula will be noted. Its familiarity may perhaps take away somewhat from the significance it should otherwise carry that Novatian did not absolutely deny the possibility of eventual forgiveness.

Reference should be made to one other passage :—

“ For this is conceded by the Giver to the ecclesiastical authority (*juri ecclesiastico*), both that it should give penance, and that after penance it should accord reception.”

The familiar technical phrase of later centuries *jus ecclesiasticum*, the ecclesiastical law, is not expected in a treatise of the third or fourth century. And since it is here it is most reasonable to understand that it has nothing of the later technical sense about it. Instead of speaking of the Church or the clergy, the writer employs on this occasion the more abstract expression “ the ecclesiastical competence ” or “ authority.”

Rome and Carthage lead the Western churches.

Reconciliation of apostate now admitted for all time.

The Eastern churches.

Alexandria.

S. Dionysius.

The two leading Western churches of Rome and Carthage have so far occupied attention in this chapter. Those two churches when agreed were at this time in a position to dominate Western or Latin Christianity. And in this matter of the treatment of the lapsed after the Decian persecution they were agreed. S. Cyprian's controlling personality at Carthage worked in concord with the prevailing sense at Rome. The agreement had the practical effect for all future time of bringing the capital sins of apostasy and idolatry within the scope of the penitential system of the Church. The rigorism which reserved capital sins for the Divine tribunal as being irremissible on earth was for ever broken. It would last on pilloried in a sect for three or four centuries more, and then die out and be forgotten.

It should be a canon of the historian that in the history of the Christian Church it is never safe to assume results from one group of churches to another. And it is now necessary to inquire what indications have come down to us from the Decian period as regards the Eastern churches. First as regards the church of Alexandria. Alexandria, though like Carthage situated on what is now called the African Continent, was distinctively Eastern in character. Its bishop at this time was Dionysius, whom Eusebius styles “ the great bishop of Alexandria ” (ὁ μέγας Ἀλεξανδρέων ἐπίσκοπος).<sup>1</sup> Born in the last decade of the second century, of pagan parents, he became a convert to Christianity in his early manhood. He followed Heraclas as head of the catechetical school, and later (A.D. 247–248) as bishop of the city. When the persecution broke out he retired from Alexandria, and though taken by some soldiers, succeeded in again finding obscurity. From his exile he directed and encouraged his flock. The fragments of his letters preserved in Eusebius are of high interest. From them we learn that the Christians of Alexandria behaved much as Christians elsewhere. Some confessed and suffered : while others rushed eagerly to the altars to sacrifice, protesting that they had never been Christians at all. For the purpose of the present investigation the most interesting incident of the persecution is the case of Sarapion.

<sup>1</sup> H.E., VII. Pro.



Sarapion had lived a long life without blame, but in the persecution he flinched and sacrificed. Subsequently he repeatedly sought to be reconciled, but was rejected. He fell sick, and was for three days without speech or perception. Recovering somewhat on the fourth day he sent his grandson to fetch a priest (*τῶν πρεσβυτέρων τινὰ κάλεσόν*), and then became speechless again. The lad made his way to the priest; but found him sick himself, and unable to come. The narrative of Dionysius proceeds thus:—

“But as an order had been given by me that reconciliation should be accorded to the dying if they asked for it, and especially if they had besought it previously, in order that they might pass away in good hope, he gave the lad a fragment of the Eucharist, bidding him to moisten It, and to drop It into the old man’s mouth. The lad arrived bearing (the Eucharist); and as he approached, before he entered, Sarapion having again recovered, said, ‘Art thou come, child? So the priest was not able to come himself? But do thou quickly that which was commanded thee, and let me depart.’ The lad moistened (the Eucharist), and dropped It in his mouth. He slowly swallowed It, and then gave up the ghost.”<sup>1</sup>

Dionysius continues:—

“Is it not thus clear that he was preserved and that he remained till he was absolved (*ἕως λυθῆναι*), and his sin having been wiped away, he might find recognition for the many good deeds which he had done?”<sup>1</sup>

From this narrative it appears that Dionysius, and presumably with him the large group of churches dependent on Alexandria, were prepared like the churches of Rome and Carthage to reconcile a duly penitent apostate who had sacrificed when death appeared to be in sight. It is farther clear that Dionysius was not prepared to reconcile such a penitent apostate till death was imminent. It is noticeable also that there is no mention in the narrative of the intervention of martyrs.

As regards the procedure of reconciliation it was exercised ordinarily in such clinical cases by the priests or presbyters under direction from the bishops; it was sufficient if the sick man called any one of the priests (*τῶν πρεσβυτέρων τινὰ*): when the priest actually summoned was unable on account of sickness to attend, he, with the bishop’s general instruction in his hands, adjudged that reconciliation should be accorded, and he accorded it by committing the Eucharist to the hands of the messenger to administer It to the dying penitent. That this accordance of communion carried with it absolution and the wiping away of sin was a result which Dionysius accepts as obvious.

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *H.E.*, VI. 44.

In the unhappy conflict between Novatian and Cornelius, Dionysius showed himself a worthy bishop. He addressed to Novatian<sup>1</sup> a letter which, while it was courteous in tone, was none the less an unhesitating condemnation of his schismatical proceedings, "It behoved thee rather to suffer anything soever, than that the Church of God should be cleft asunder."<sup>2</sup>

Antioch.

At Antioch Babylas the bishop had suffered martyrdom in the Decian persecution (A.D. 250). He had been succeeded by Fabius. This bishop was disposed to favour the rigorism of Novatian. It was feared that he would recognise Novatian as canonical bishop of Rome. Cornelius entered into a correspondence of some length with Fabius, with a view to avert such a calamity. Dionysius of Alexandria also wrote to him. The narrative of Sarapion given above occurs in a letter to Fabius, and is employed to show that it is right to accord communion to the penitent. Fabius proposed to hold a council at Antioch to deal with the matter, but died before the council assembled. The council appears to have assembled under his successor Demetrianus, when the churches represented combined in rejecting the schism of Novatian. At least it would seem to be of the results of this council that Dionysius writes :—

"Know now, brother, that all the churches in the East and beyond, which were formerly divided, have acquiesced; and all the bishops (προεστῶτες) everywhere are of one mind, rejoicing exceedingly over the peace beyond expectation which has come about, to wit, Demetrianus at Antioch, Theoctistus at Cæsarea, Mazabanes at Ælia (Alexander being dead), Marinus at Tyre, Heliodorus at Laodicea (after the death of Thelymidrus), Helanus at Tarsus and all the churches of Cilicia, Firmilian, and all Cappadocia."<sup>3</sup>

Council of  
Antioch,  
A.D. 252.

The date of the Council of Antioch would be A.D. 252.<sup>4</sup> The churches of the East, like those of the West, are henceforth agreed in rejecting the rigorism of Novatian. But, as in the West, this does not mean that the rigoristic spirit is past. It means that the Catholic Church has rejected that spirit, and that rigorism must now enshrine itself in a definitely schismatic form in the separatism of Novatian. In every great city of the East as of the West the sect of Novatian takes shape. When Constantinople rises glorious on the old Byzantium three-quarters of a century later there will be found in it not only the faith and the temper of the Catholic Church, but the sect of Novatian with its separate worship

Prevalence  
of the  
Novatian-  
ist sect.

<sup>1</sup> He calls him *Novatus*.    <sup>2</sup> Eusebius, *H.E.*, VI. 45.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, VII. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Hefele casts some doubt on the occurrence of a Council of Antioch in A.D. 252 (*Conciliengeschichte*, ed. 1873, I. 14). The letter of Dionysius at least shows that the agreement of the churches of the East, which was the purpose in view in summoning the council, was in fact attained from this time. That it could be attained thus quickly and unexpectedly seems to imply opportunity of conference.



and its haughty pretensions. Each unit of the sect in its widespread organisation has its bishops, its clergy, its churches, and its cemeteries. In A.D. 326 an enactment of Constantine will recognise the existence of the Novatianists before the law. The sect will come to enjoy a great consideration.

Novatianism is the concrete historic fact which registers a great struggle on one of the most fundamental questions of Penance. Do the greater, the capital sins fall within the scope of the Lord's commission to the Church to forgive or to retain? or are they essentially irremissible here and before the Church, and by their nature reserved to the judgment of the Lord at the great day? The Catholic Church answers one way: the Novatianist sect the other. Socrates records that when some seventy years after the Decian persecution the emperor Constantine was summoning the bishops to Nicæa he summoned among others Acesius, a bishop of the Novatianist sect. Acesius, when asked by the emperor if he could assent to the creed of the council, replied: "The council has defined nothing new: for what it has defined as to the faith and as to Easter I hold from the tradition which goes back to the beginnings and to apostolic times." When Constantine then asked him why he refused to be in union with the Catholics he recalled "what had taken place under Decius at the time of the persecution, and the rigour of the canon which forbids reception to the partaking of the divine mysteries of any one who after Baptism has committed one of the offences which the divine scriptures call mortal: if it is right to exhort these sinners to penitence, still they cannot look for pardon from the bishops, but only from GOD, Who alone can pardon sins." Constantine told the bishop to take a ladder and climb to heaven by himself.<sup>1</sup>

Constantine's humorous reply is more generally remembered than the rest of this history. The reply of the bishop as given by Socrates may, however be recognised as representing with precision the old rigoristic spirit now become the spirit of Novatianism. There are certain sins which the divine scriptures call mortal. Any person who after Baptism has committed one of these sins may never be admitted to communion as long as he lives. There is no power vested in the bishop for the according of pardon to such persons in the Church on earth. These mortal sins are reserved to GOD, Who may pardon them hereafter.

It is this rigorism which the Catholic Church rejected everywhere but in Spain after A.D. 252. At Carthage, at Rome, at Alexandria, at Antioch, the constraining force of the circumstances following on the Decian persecution had called for a definitive ruling. And the ruling was in all these centres given in the sense that the Church had the power to reconcile even the faithless Christian who had denied his Lord.

Rigorism rejected by the Catholic Church from A.D. 252 except in Spain.

<sup>1</sup> Socrates, *Hist. Ecc.*, I. 10.

## V. FROM THE DECIAN PERSECUTION TO A.D. 300

### TEXT OF AUTHORITIES

**S. Gregory Thaumaturgus.**

**The Didascalia Apostolorum.**

**The Apostolic Constitutions (only passages which reproduce the Didascalia).**

[*A woman debauched in the irruption, if she had been unchaste before it, was not readily to be allowed participation in the Prayers.*]

**S. Gregory Thaumaturgus**, bishop of Neo-Cæsarea in Pontus (c. A.D. 210–270).

*Canonica Epistola.*

*Can. i.*

[Migne, *P. G.*, X. 1020.]

Ἄλλ' εἰ μὲν καὶ πρότερον κατέγνωστό τινος ὁ βίος πορευομένου ὀπίσω ὀφθαλμῶν τῶν ἐκπορνεύοντων κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον, δηλονότι ἡ πορνικὴ ἕξις ὑποπτος καὶ ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τῆς αἰχμαλωσίας. Καὶ οὐ προχείρως δεῖ ταῖς τοιαύταις κοινωνεῖν τῶν εὐχῶν.

[*All articles the property of others to be esteemed anathema.*]

*Can. iii.*

[Migne, *P. G.*, X. 1030.]

Οὐκ ἰδοὺ Ἀχαρ ὁ Ζαρὰ πλημμελεία ἐπλημμέλησεν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀναθέματος, καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν συναγωγὴν Ἰσραὴλ ἐγενήθη ἡ ὀργή; Καὶ εἰς μόνος οὗτος ἤμαρτε, μὴ μόνος ἀπέθανεν ἐν τῇ ἁμαρτία αὐτοῦ. Ἡμῖν δὲ πᾶν τὸ μὴ ἡμέτερον, ἀλλὰ ἀλλότριον, τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ κέρδος, ἀνάθεμα νενομίσθαι προσήκει. Κάκεῖνος μὲν γὰρ ὁ Ἀχαρ ἐκ τῆς προνομῆς ἔλαβε· καὶ αὐτοὶ νῦν ἐκ προνομῆς· κάκεῖνος μὲν τὰ τῶν πολεμίων, οἱ δὲ νῦν τὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν, κερδαίνοντες ὀλέθρον κέρδος.

[*Finder's right inadmissible. Restitution necessary.*]

*Can. iv.*

[Migne, *P. G.*, X. 1033.]

Μηδεὶς ἐξαπατάτω ἑαυτὸν, μήτε ὡς εὐρών· οὔτε γὰρ εὐρόντα κερδαίνειν ἔξεστι. Φησὶ γὰρ τὸ Δευτερονόμιον· Μὴ, ἰδὼν τὸν μόσχον τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου καὶ τὸ πρόβατον πλανώμενα ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ, περτίδης αὐτὰ, ἀποστροφῇ ἀποστρέψεις αὐτὰ τῷ ἀδελφῷ σου . . . Ἐν δὲ τῇ Ἐξόδῳ,



**S. Gregory Thaumaturgus.**

οὐ μόνον ἐὰν τὰ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ τις εὕρῃ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐχθροῦ, Ἀποστροφῇ, φησὶν, ἀποστρέψεις αὐτὰ εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ κυρίου αὐτῶν. Εἰ δὲ ἐν εἰρήνῃ ῥαθυμοῦντος καὶ τρυφῶντος καὶ τῶν ἰδίων ἀμελοῦντος ἀδελφοῦ ἢ ἐχθροῦ, κερδᾶναι οὐκ ἔξεστιν, πόσῳ μᾶλλον δυστυχοῦντος καὶ πολεμίους φεύγοντος, καὶ κατὰ ἀνάγκην τὰ ἴδια ἐγκαταλιπόντος.

[Of those who keep what they have found as compensation for their own losses. The system here (Neo-Cæsarea in Pontus).]

Can. v.

[Migne, P. G., X. 1037.]

Ἄλλοι δὲ ἑαυτοὺς ἐξαπατῶσιν, ἀντὶ τῶν ἰδίων τῶν ἀπολομένων ἃ εὗρον ἀλλότρια κατέχοντες. ἵνα ἐπειδὴ αὐτοῖς Βοράδοι καὶ Γότθοι τὰ τοῦ πολέμου εἰργάσαντο, αὐτοὶ ἄλλοις Βοράδοι καὶ Γότθοι γίνωνται Ἀπεστείλαμεν οὖν τὸν ἀδελφὸν καὶ συγγέροντα Εὐφρόσυνον διὰ ταῦτα πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἵνα κατὰ τὸν ἐνθάδε τύπον καὶ αὐτὸς δώῃ ὁμοίως καὶ ὧν δεῖ τὰς κατηγορίας προσίσθαι, καὶ οὓς δεῖ ἐκκηρύξαι τῶν εὐχῶν.

[Of those who detained their brethren when escaping from captivity.]

Can. vi.

[Migne, P. G., X. 1040.]

Περὶ τῶν βία κατεχόντων τοὺς ἐκ τῶν βαρβάρων αἰχμαλώτους. Ἀπηγγέλθη δέ τι ἡμῖν καὶ ἄπιστον ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ ὑμῶν γεγόμενον, πάντως που ὑπὸ ἀπίστων καὶ ἀσεβῶν καὶ μὴ εἰδόντων μηδὲ ὄνομα Κυρίου, ὅτι ἄρα εἰς τοσοῦτόν τιες ὠμότητος καὶ ἀπανθρωπίας προεχώρησαν, ὥστε τινὰς τοὺς διαφυγόντας αἰχμαλώτους βία κατέχειν. Ἀποστείλατέ τινας εἰς τὴν χώραν, μὴ καὶ σκηπτοὶ πέσωσιν ἐπὶ τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας.

[Those Christians who have joined the barbarians in the slaughter of their brethren, or have betrayed their brethren, should be excluded even from the Hearing.]

Can. vii.

[Migne, P. G., X. 1040.]

Τοὺς μὲν οὖν ἐγκαταλεχθέντας τοῖς βαρβάροις, καὶ μετ' αὐτῶν ἐν αἰχμαλωσίᾳ ἐπελθόντας, ἐπιλαθομένους, ὅτι ἦσαν Ποντικοὶ καὶ Χριστιανοὶ, ἐκβαρβαρωθέντας δὲ ὡς καὶ φονεύειν τοὺς ὁμοφύλους ἢ ξύλῳ ἢ ἀγχόνῃ, ὑποδεικνύναι δὲ ἢ ὁδοὺς ἢ οἰκίας ἀγνοοῦσι τοῖς βαρβάροις· καὶ τῆς ἀκροάσεως ἀπεῖρξαι δεῖ, μέχρις ἂν κοινῇ περὶ αὐτῶν τι δόξῃ συνελθοῦσι τοῖς ἀγίοις, καὶ πρὸ αὐτῶν τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι.

[Those who have broken into the houses of others during the barbarian irruption are unworthy the Hearing if convicted only after accusation by others: if by their own acknowledgment they may be placed among the Fallers.]

Can. viii.

[Migne, P. G., X. 1041.]

Περὶ τῶν οἴκοις ἀλλοτρίοις ἐπελθεῖν τολμησάντων ἐν τῇ τῶν βαρβάρων ἐπιδρομῇ. Τοὺς δὲ οἴκοις ἀλλοτρίοις ἐπελθεῖν τολμήσαντας, ἐὰν μὲν κατηγορηθέντες ἐλεγχθῶσι, μηδὲ τῆς ἀκροάσεως ἀξιώσαι· ἐὰν δὲ αὐτοὺς ἐξείπωσι καὶ ἀποδῶσιν, ἐν τῇ τῶν ὑποστρεφόντων τάξει ὑποπίπτειν.

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[Those who have found and appropriated articles of plunder left by the barbarians, if they confess, may share in the Prayers; but if convicted on accusation, are to be placed among the Fallers.]

Can. ix.

[Migne, P. G., X. 1044.]

Τοὺς δὲ ἐν πεδίῳ εὐρόντας τι ἢ ἐν ταῖς ἑαυτῶν οἰκίαις καταλειφθέν ὑπὸ τῶν βαρβάρων, εἰ μὲν κατηγορηθέντες ἐλεγχθῶσιν, ὁμοίως ἐν τοῖς ὑποπίπτουσιν· εἰ δὲ ἑαυτοὺς ἐξείπωσι καὶ ἀποδώσι, καὶ τῆς εὐχῆς ἀξιῶσαι.

[No consideration to be demanded for restored articles.]

Can. x.

[Migne, P. G., X. 1046.]

Τοὺς δὲ τὴν ἐντολὴν πληροῦντος ἐκτὸς πάσης αἰσχροκερδεΐας πληροῦν δεῖ, μήτε μὴντρα ἢ σῶστρα, ἢ εὔρετρα, ἢ ᾧ ὀνόματι ταῦτα καλοῦσιν, ἀπαιτοῦντας.

[The five penitential grades.]

Can. xi.

[Migne, P. G., X. 1048.]

Ἡ πρόσκλαυσις ἔξω τῆς πύλης τοῦ εὐκτηρίου ἐστίν· ἔνθα ἐστῶτα τὸν ἀμαρτάνοντα χρὴ τῶν εἰσιόντων δεῖσθαι πιστῶν, ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ εὐχεσθαι. Ἡ ἀκρόασις ἔνδοθι τῆς πύλης ἐν τῷ νάρθηκι, ἔνθα ἐστάναι χρὴ τὸν ἡμαρτηκότα ἕως τῶν κατηχουμένων, καὶ ἐντεῦθεν ἐξέρχεσθαι. Ἀκούων γάρ, φησί, τῶν Γραφῶν καὶ τῆς διδασκαλίας, ἐκβαλλέσθω, καὶ μὴ ἀξιούσθω προσευχῆς. Ἡ δὲ ὑπόπτωσις, ἵνα, ἔσωθεν τῆς πύλης τοῦ ναοῦ ἱστάμενος, μετὰ τῶν κατηχουμένων ἐξέρχηται. Ἡ σύστασις, ἵνα συνιστᾶται τοῖς πιστοῖς, καὶ μὴ ἐξέρχηται μετὰ τῶν κατηχουμένων· τελευταῖον ἡ μέθεξις τῶν ἁγιασμάτων.

[S. Gregory outlined the grades. He did not determine the duration of the penalties, or apply the system (in detail) to particular sins. S. Basil. The discretion of the bishop.]

**Balsamon, Theodore.**

*Scholia in Epistolam Canonicam Sancti Gregorii Thaumaturgi.*

In Can. xi.

[Migne, P. G., CXXXVIII. 545.]

Ὁ μὲν παρὼν ἅγιος, πέντε τόπους μετανοούντων ὑποτυπώσας, οὐ παρεδήλωσε τοὺς καιροὺς τῆς ἐργασίας αὐτῶν, οὔτε μὴν τὰ ἀμαρτήματα δι' ἃ ἡ μετάνοια ὤρίσθη. Ὁ δὲ μέγας Βασίλειος ἐν ταῖς κανονικαῖς ἐπιστολαῖς αὐτοῦ ταῦτα μετὰ ἀκριβείας παρέδωκε. Πλὴν καὶ οὗτος εἰς τὴν ἐπισκοπικὴν διάκρισιν τὴν διὰ τῶν ἐπιτιμίων θεραπείαν ἀνῆρτησεν.

[Grave sin after Baptism involves the Gehenna of fire.]

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C. 5 (p. 26).

Again in the Gospel he preacheth much and saith, "Every one that hath ears to hear let him hear," and they have not heard, even those that thought they heard, because they leaned to the



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evil perdition of the heresies, those on whom the sentence of condemnation will come, for we do not believe, brethren, that when a man goeth down to the water, he will again do the abominable and impure works of the heathen and the depraved; for this is manifest and known to all men, that every one who doeth evil things after having received baptism, is already condemned to the Gehenna of fire.

*[The bishop is to reprove a sinner who presents himself at church without penitence. The bishop holds the place of God Almighty. To him it is said, What ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.]*

C. 5 (p. 27).

But if he who sinneth see the Bishop and the Deacons, that they are free from accusation and that all the flock are pure, in the first place he will not dare to go up to the congregation because he is reprov'd by his mind; and if it should happen that he have courage, and should go to the church in his impudence, let him be reprov'd and reprimanded by the Bishop; he will look at them all, and will not find an offence in one of them, neither in the Bishop, nor in those who are with him; he will blush therefore, and with much shame he will go out quickly, weeping, and be in penitence of soul. Thus the flock will remain pure. Again, when he has gone out he will repent of his sin and weep and be consoled before God, that he may have hope. Then again all the flock having seen his weeping and his tears, will fear, knowing and understanding that every one that sins shall perish. Because of this, therefore, O Bishop, strive to be pure in thy works, and know thy place, that thou art appointed in the semblance of God Almighty, and that thou holdest the place of God Almighty; thus sit in the Church and teach, as one who hath power to judge those that sin, in the place of Almighty God; for to you Bishops it is said in the Gospel, that what ye bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven.

*[The bishop is, like God, to receive those who repent with compassion.]*

C. 6 (p. 28).

Therefore judge severely, O Bishop, like Almighty God, and receive those who repent with compassion like God; and reprove, and beseech and teach, for even the Lord God has promised with oaths pardon to those who have sinned. . . .

*[First then severity; and afterwards mercy.]*

C. 6 (p. 28).

Thou therefore, O Bishop, judge thus, first severely, and afterwards receive with mercy and clemency [him who] has promised

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to repent, reprove him and make him sorry and persuade him, because of the word that was said in David thus, "Thou wilt not give up the soul of him that confesseth to Thee.

*[The bishop not to be deterred from mercy by rigorists.]*

C. 6 (p. 29).

Because of this therefore receive him who repenteth, not doubting in the least, and be not prevented by those who have no mercy, those who say, We must not be defiled by those.

*[The bishop is the head, and is not required to follow such rigorists, who are but the tail.]*

C. 6 (p. 29).

We do not require you therefore to confirm those who delight in death, hate their brethren and love quarrels, for which reason they are ready to kill; but help those who are very sick, and are in danger and sin, and deliver them from death, not according to the hardness of their heart and their word and their thoughts. For it is not required of thee, O Bishop, that being the head thou shouldst listen to the tail, that is to say to the layman, to the quarrelsome man who delights in the destruction of another; but look thou only at the command of the Lord GOD, and for this reason that they may not expect to perish, nor be defiled with the sins of others.

*[GOD gives no place to the opinion of such hard-hearted persons. He calls sinners to repentance. Let the bishop receive the penitent.]*

C. 6 (p. 31).

See, dear and beloved children, how many are the mercies of the Lord our GOD, and His goodness and clemency towards us. He requireth from those who have sinned that they repent; and in many places He speaketh about these things, and giveth no place to the opinion of those who are hard-hearted, and who wish to judge sharply and without mercy, and to cast completely away those who have sinned, as if there were no repentance for them. But GOD is not thus, but He calls even sinners to repentance, and gives them hope, but those that have not sinned He teaches and says to them, that they must not expect that we should bear or share in the sins of others. Simply therefore receive those that repent, not doubting.

*[After due severity the sinner when penitent may be admitted. His penance should cover two or three, or five, or seven weeks of fasting. But he is first to be put out of the Church.]*

C. 6 (p. 32).

It is required of you, O Bishops, according to the Scriptures,



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that ye judge those who sin with pity and mercy. For him that walketh on the brink of a river and falleth, if thou leave him in the river, thou pushest and throwest him down and comittest murder; or when a man has fallen by the side of a river's brink, and nearly perishes, stretch out thy hand to him quickly, and draw him up that he perish not: thus therefore do, that thy people may learn and be wise, and also that he that sinneth may not perish utterly, but that thou mayest look to him that hath sinned, be angry with him, and command them to put him out. And when he is put out, be ye not angry with him, and contend with him, but let them keep him outside of the church, and then let them go in and make supplication for him, for even our Saviour made supplication to His Father for those that had sinned, as it is written in the Gospel, "My Father, they know not what they do, nor what they speak, yet, if it be possible, forgive them." Then thou, O Bishop, command him to come in, and thyself ask him if he repents. If he be worthy to be received into the Church, appoint him days of fasting according to his fault, two, or three, or five, or seven weeks, and thus allow him to go, saying to him all that is proper for admonition and doctrine. Reprove him, and tell him to be humble-minded, and to pray and make supplication in the days of fasting, that he be found worthy of the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in Genesis, "Thou hast sinned, cease. Let thy repentance be with thee, and thou shalt have power over it." Look also at Miriam the sister of Moses, when she had spoken against Moses, and afterwards she repented, and was thought worthy of forgiveness, it was said by the Lord, "If her father had but spit in her face, would she not have been ashamed and separated for seven days without the camp, and then she would have come in?" Thus also it is required of you to act towards those who promise to repent of their sins. Put them out of the Church as it is proper for their faults, and afterwards receive them as a merciful father.

*[The bishop's place is that of God Almighty. He has received by power to forgive sins.]*

C. 7 (p. 34).

Therefore, O Bishop, teach and reprove and loosen by pardon, and know that thy place is that of God Almighty, and thou hast received power to forgive sins, for it is said to you Bishops, "All that ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven; and all that ye shall loose shall be loosed." As therefore thou hast power to loose, know thyself and thy conduct and thy works. . . .

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*[When the penitent is admitted to reconciliation after the people have prayed for him the bishop is to lay his hands on him.]*

C. 7 (p. 34).

For thus, as thou shalt give a sufficient answer for many, so thou shalt care for every one; that thou mayest keep those that are whole, and admonish those that sin, and correct and reprove and punish and lighten them by means of repentance and pardon; and when a sinner repents and weeps, receive him; and when the people have prayed for him, lay (thy hands) upon him, and allow him thenceforth to be in the Church.

*[The bishop, who fills the place of Christ, has power to forgive. Like Christ, the bishop is a physician to cure sick souls. They who harshly expel are guilty of the murder of the sinner. If a bishop forgive not he should not expect forgiveness for himself. God will condemn the rigorist to everlasting fire.]*

C. 7, in *Cod. Sang.* (p. 35).

Thus obey thou also, O Bishop; visit the one that is lost, and seek the one that has wandered, and restore the one that is far away, because thou hast power to forgive the sins of him that has fallen . . . for thou fillest the place of the Christ. Because of this also our Saviour said to him that had sinned, "Thy sins are forgiven thee; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." Peace then is the Church of quiet and rest; she in whom He established those whom He loosed from their sins whole and without spot, having a good hope, and being diligent in the cultivation of works and afflictions. As a wise and sympathetic physician He cures all men, and mostly those who have wandered in their sins, for "the whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." Thou also, O Bishop, art made the physician of His Church, therefore do not restrain the medicine that thou mayest heal those that are sick in their sins, but cure them by every means, and make them whole and establish them safe in the Church; that thou be not taken by this word which the Lord spake, "Ye have ruled them with violence and levity." Lead not therefore with violence; be not vehement, nor judge sharply, nor be merciless, nor deride the people who are under thy hand, nor hide from them the word of repentance, for that would be to have ruled them with violence and levity. But if ye oversee my people harshly and punish them with violence, and drive them and expel them, and do not receive them that have sinned, but harshly and mercilessly hide repentance from them, thou wilt even be a helper in their conversion to evil, and in scattering the flocks to be food for the beasts of the field, that is to say, to the wicked men of this world, but not to men in truth, but to the



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beasts, to the heathen, to the heretics; for him who goes out of the Church they follow immediately, like evil beasts, to swallow him for food; because of thine own harshness, he then that goeth out of the Church, either goeth and entereth in unto the heathen, or plunges into heresies; he will be entirely a stranger, and be removed from the Church, and from the hope of God, and thou wilt be guilty of his ruin, because thou wert ready to put out, and to cast away those who sin; and when they repented and returned, thou didst not wish to receive them. Behold thou art fallen under the condemnation of this word which said, "Their feet hasten to evil and are swift to shed blood; affliction and misery are in their paths, and the way of peace have they not known." The Way of Peace is our Saviour, as He said, "Forgive the sins of those who sin, that your sins also may be forgiven; give and it shall be given unto you," which is, "Give the pardon of sins, that you also may receive pardon." He also teaches us that we should be constant in prayers at all times, and that we should say, "Forgive us our debts and our sins, as we also forgive our debtors." For if thou forgivest not those that sin, how canst thou receive forgiveness? Behold, will not thy mouth accuse thee, and thou wilt convict thyself of having said, "I forgive" when thou hast not forgiven, but hast verily murdered; for he who puts any one out of the Church without mercy, what else does he do but murder bitterly, and shed blood without pity? For if a righteous man is unjustly killed by any one by means of the sword, he is received to rest with God; but he who puts any one out of the Church and receives him not again, kills verily evilly and bitterly for eternity; and God gives to be food to cruel fire for ever, him who puts out of the Church, and does not look at the mercy of God, and does not remember His goodness to the penitent, and does not bear the likeness of the Christ, nor pay attention to any people who repent of the multitude of their failings that they may receive pardon from him.

*[No sin is worse than the worship of idols. Yet Manasseh was forgiven. Not so Amon, who presumed on God's mercy.]*

C. 7 in *Cod. Sang.* (p. 39).

Like as Manasseh worshipped evil idols bitterly, and killed the righteous, and when he repented the Lord forgave him, although there is no sin worse than the worship of idols, yet a place for repentance was given. But to him who saith, Good things shall happen to me though I walk in the perverse will of my heart, thus saith the Lord, I will stretch out My hand upon him, and he shall be for a history and a proverb, because Amon son of Manasseh . . .

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[*Our Lord and God, Who was clement to the woman taken in adultery, should be the bishop's Exemplar.*]

C. 7 in *Cod. Sang.* (p. 39).

For if thou receive not him who repents, because thou art merciless, thou sinnest against the Lord God, because thou dost not obey our Lord and God in acting as He acted; for even He to that woman who had sinned, her whom the elders placed before Him and left it to judgment at His hands, and went away; He then who searcheth the hearts, asked her and said to her, "Have the Elders condemned thee, my daughter?" She saith to him, "No, Lord." And our Saviour said, "Go, and return no more to do this, neither do I condemn thee." In this therefore let our Saviour and King and God be to you a sign, O Bishops! be like Him that ye may be gentle and humble and merciful and clement, and peacemakers and without anger, teachers, and reprovers, and receivers and persuaders. Be not wrathful and be not tyrants, nor contemptuous, nor haughty, nor boasters.

[*The analogy of the penitent and the catechumen. Both alike are admitted to hear the Word: both are excluded from the Prayer. This partial admission of the penitent is in accordance with the mind of the Lord. As the catechumen is baptized, and then admitted to communion, so let the bishop lay his hand on the penitent, the people praying for him; and then let the penitent partake.*]

C. 10 (p. 55).

We do not refuse salvation even to the heathen if they repent and renounce and remove from themselves their error. Therefore let him be accounted to you as a heathen and as a publican, he who is convicted of evil works and of falsehood; and afterwards if he promise to repent as the heathen, when they wish and promise to repent and say, "We believe," we receive them into the congregation that they may hear the Word, but we do not communicate with them until they receive the seal and are confirmed. Thus also we do not communicate with these until they show the fruits of repentance; for they can certainly come in, if they wish to hear the Word, that they may not perish utterly, but in (the) prayer<sup>1</sup> they take no part, but go outside; because that even they, when they see that they do not take part in the Church, restrain themselves, and repent.

[*The impenitent sinner must be cast out: for even the heathen are required to repent before acceptance.*]

C. 10 (p. 54).

Therefore at the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established. And if he obey not, reprove him before all

<sup>1</sup> Achelis and Flemming: *Am Gebet jedoch sollen sie nicht teilnehmen.*



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the Church; if he do not hear even the Church, let him be counted unto thee as a heathen and as a publican. Because the Lord hath said unto you, O Bishops, that henceforth ye receive not that man into the Church as Christians and be not partakers with him; for not even the heathen or the wicked publicans dost thou receive into the Church, nor make thyself partaker with them, unless they first repent, promising so that they may believe, and never henceforth again do evil deeds . . . . . of their former deeds, and become eager to be received into the Church in (for the) prayer.<sup>1</sup> They also who see them and hear that they have gone out like publicans may fear, and take heed to themselves that they sin not, lest it happen thus to them also, and they go out of the Church, being reproved for sin or for falsehood. Do not utterly prevent them from entering the church, and hearing the discourse of the Bishop; for even our Lord and Saviour did not completely reject and cast out the publicans and sinners but even ate with them. Because of this also the Pharisees murmured against Him, saying, "He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners." Then our Saviour answered and said against their thoughts and murmurings, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." Therefore have intercourse with those who have been reproved for their sins, and are in a bad state, and attach them to you and take care of their [interests], and talk ye with them and console them, keep hold of them, and cause them to be converted; and afterwards when every one of them has repented, and has shown the fruits of repentance, thereafter receive him in (the) prayer, as [ye do] to the heathen. As therefore thou baptizest a heathen, and thereafter receivest him, so on that man also lay the hand, every one praying for him; thereafter bring him in and let him partake with the Church. Let that laying on of the hand be to him instead of baptism; for if by the laying on of the hand and by baptism they receive the communication of the Holy Ghost. . . .<sup>2</sup>

[*The impenitent to be cast out.*]

C. 10 (p. 56).

But if thou see a person who does not wish to repent, but has completely cut off hope of himself, then with grief and sorrow cut him off and cast him out of the Church. . . . But be watchful that ye condemn not any one iniquitously, and help the wicked, because that in condemning others ye are condemning yourselves. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Achelis and Flemming: *in die Gemeinde zum Gebet aufgenommen zu werden.*

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: *denn entweder durch Handauflegung oder durch die Taufe empfangen sie die Mitteilung des heiligen Geistes.*

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[*A second casting out is final.*]

C. 11 (p. 58).

For that one, when he goes out for the second time from the Church is justly cut off, and the Church is the more beautified, for there is peace in it (*Cod. Sang.*, for it was wanting to her, because from that hour the Church will be free from blasphemy and trouble).

[*Of the bishop's tribunal. Christ co-operates.*]

C. 11 (p. 60).

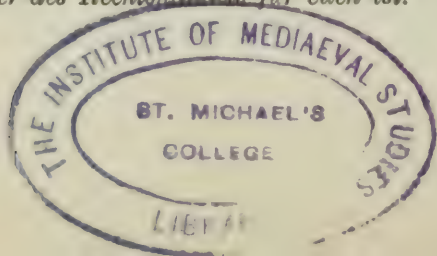
But if there happen anything by the operation of the Enemy, let them be judged before you; let it be on Monday lest it happen that some one rise up against the word of your judgments; that there be opportunity for you until the Sabbath, that ye may arrange the matter and make peace and pacify them on the Sunday. Let the Bishops then be constant in all judgments with the Elders and Deacons, and judge ye without respect of persons; the two individuals therefore coming and standing together in judgment, as the Scripture hath said, "Those who have any controversy or litigation with one another," and when ye have heard them righteously give an answer of judgment. Strive to keep them in love, before the judgment come out against them (*Cod. Sang.* lest against one of them being a brother there come among you a condemnation of earthly judgment, but judge thus, even as ye shall certainly be judged) so that in the judgment ye may have the Christ as Associate, Counsellor, Assessor, and Overseer of the Court.<sup>1</sup>

[*No fellowship in prayer with those cast out.*]

C. 15 (p. 75).

*It is not proper to pray with one who is censured (S. separated).* For every one who prays or takes part with any one who has gone out of the Church, is justly reckoned with him, for these things lead to the dissolution and the destruction of souls. For if any one take part and pray with him who is censured and is put out of the Church, and doth not obey the Bishop, he obeyeth not God, and is polluted along with him. Also he alloweth him not to repent. For if a man doth not take part with him he repenteth, and weepeth, and prayeth, and imploreth to be received, and turneth from what he hath done, and is saved.

<sup>1</sup> Achelis and Flemming have: *So also sollt ihr richten, wie auch ihr gerichtet werdet, wie auch im Gericht Christus Teilnehmer und Beisitzer, Berater und Prüfer des Rechts Handels für euch ist.*





**The Didascalia Apostolorum.**

[*No offerings to be received from those cast out.*]

C. 18 (p. 83).

GOD has said to you not to take from the wicked and help the churches; it were profitable for you to be tortured by hunger, rather than to take from the wicked.

Therefore investigate and prove, that ye may receive from believers, those who are in communion with the Church and conduct themselves aright, that ye may nourish those who are in straits. Do not receive from those who are put out of the Church and are blameable, until they are thought worthy to become members of the Church. . . . If it should happen that ye take from the wicked, against your will, make no use of it for nourishment, unless it be just a little, expend it in wood for fire; lest a widow being in straits should buy with it some food for herself. Thus let the widows, not being polluted by evil, pray that they may receive from GOD all good things that they ask and seek.

[*The bishop is in authority over all classes of men, to judge those who have sinned. To bishops it has been given to bind and loose.*]

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II. 11.

[Migne, P. G., I. 612.]

Διὰ τοῦτο οὖν, ἐπίσκοπε, σπούδαζε καθαρὸς εἶναι τοῖς ἔργοις, γνωρίζων τὸν τρόπον σου καὶ τὴν ἀξίαν, ὡς Θεοῦ τύπον ἔχων ἐν ἀνθρώποις, τῷ πάντων ἄρχειν ἀνθρώπων, ἱερέων, βασιλέων, ἀρχόντων, πατέρων, υἱῶν, διδασκάλων, καὶ πάντων ὁμοῦ τῶν ὑπηκόων. Καὶ οὕτως ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ καθέζου, τὸν λόγον ποιούμενος, ὡς ἐξουσίαν ἔχων κρίνειν τοὺς ἡμαρτηκότας· ὅτι ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐπισκόποις εἴρηται· Ὁ ἐὰν δείσῃτε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ἔσται δεδεμένον ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ· καὶ ὁ ἐὰν λύσῃτε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ἔσται λελυμένον ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ.

[*The bishop is therefore to judge with authority as in the person of GOD, but to accept the penitent.*]

II. 12.

[Migne, P. G., I. 613.]

Κρίνε, οὖν, ὦ ἐπίσκοπε, μετὰ ἐξουσίας, ὡς ὁ Θεός, ἀλλὰ τοὺς μετανοοῦντας προσλαμβάνον. Ὁ γὰρ Θεός, Θεός ἐστιν ἐλέους. Ἐπίπλησσε τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσι, νουθέτει τοὺς μὴ ἐπιστρέφοντας, παρακάλει τοὺς ἐστῶτας ἐμμένειν τοῖς καλοῖς, τοὺς μετανοοῦντας προσδέχου. ὅτι Κύριος ὁ Θεός μετὰ ὄρχου ἐπηγγείλατο ἄφεσιν παρασχεῖν τοῖς μετανοοῦσιν, ἐφ' οἷς ἡμαρτον.

[*The bishop is first to condemn the offender, then to encourage his penitence, and, after due penalty, to reconcile him.*]

II. 13.

[Migne, P. G., I. 616.]

Σὺ οὖν οὕτω κρίνε, ὡς Θεῷ δικάζων. Τοῦ γὰρ Κυρίου, φησὶν, ἡ κρίσις. Πρῶτον οὖν ἀπ' ἐξουσίας τὸν ἔνοχον καταδίκασε· ἔπειτα μετὰ ἐλέου καὶ

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οἰκτιρμοῦ καὶ προσλήψεως οἰκειοῦ, ὑπισχνούμενος αὐτῷ σωτηρίαν, εἰ μετάθοιτο τοῦ τρόπου, καὶ πρὸς μετάνοιαν χωρήσῃ· μεταμελόμενον δὲ στύφῳ προσδέχου, μεμνημένος τοῦ Κυρίου εἰπόντος, ὅτι χαρὰ γίνεται ἐν οὐρανῷ ἐπὶ ἐνὶ ἁμαρτωλῷ μετανοοῦντι.

[*The bishop not to be hindered in mercy by the rigorists.*]

II. 14.

[Migne, P. G., I. 617.]

Δέξαι οὖν τὸν μετανοοῦντα, μὴ διστάζων ὅλως, μηδὲ παρεμποδιζόμενος ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνηλεῶς λεγόντων μὴ δεῖν τοιούτοις συμμολίνεσθαι, μήτε λόγου κοινωνεῖν· αὐταὶ γὰρ αἱ συμβουλίαι ἀγνοούντων εἰσὶ Θεὸν, καὶ τὴν αὐτοῦ πρόνοιαν, ἀλόγων δὲ κριτῶν καὶ θηρίων ἀμειλίκτων.

[*Nor should the bishop be subject to such persons, who should be subject to him.*]

II. 14.

[Migne, P. G., I. 621.]

Οὐδὲ γὰρ δίκαιον κεφαλὴν ὄντα σε, ὦ ἐπίσκοπε, οὐρᾷ προσέχειν, τουτέστι λαϊκῷ στασιώδει ἀνθρώπῳ, εἰς ἐτέρου ἀπώλειαν, ἀλλὰ Θεῷ μόνῳ. Ἄρχειν γὰρ σε χρὴ τῶν ὑπηκόων, οὐ μὴν καὶ ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἄρχεσθαι.

[*The bishop is neither to overlook sins, nor to reject the penitent.*]

II. 15.

[Migne, P. G., I. 623.]

Δεῖ δέ σε, ὦ ἐπίσκοπε, μήτε παρορᾶν τὰ ἁμαρτήματα τοῦ λαοῦ, μήτε τοὺς μετανοοῦντας ἀποστρέφεισθαι, ὅπως μὴ διαφθείρης, ὡς ἄπειρος, τὸ ποίμνιον Κυρίου, καὶ φανλίσῃς αὐτοῦ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ καινὸν τὸ εἰς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἐπιτεθὲν, καὶ ὀνειδισθήσῃ, καθάπερ καὶ οἱ παλαιοὶ ποιμένες κ.τ.λ.

[*Procedure in penance. From two to seven weeks of fasting to be assigned.*]

II. 16.

[Migne, P. G., I. 625.]

Ἰδὼν δὲ σὺ τὸν ἡμαρτηκότα, πικρανθεὶς κέλευσον αὐτὸν ἔξω βληθῆναι, καὶ ἐξελθόντι αὐτῷ πικραινέσθωσαν οἱ διάκονοι, καὶ ἐπιζητοῦντες κατεσχέτωσαν αὐτὸν ἔξω τῆς ἐκκλησίας, καὶ εἰσελθόντες ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ σε ἐρωτάτωσαν· καὶ γὰρ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἡμαρτηκότων ὁ Σωτὴρ τὸν Πατέρα ἠξίου, ὡς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ, Πάτερ ἄφες αὐτοῖς, οὐ γὰρ οἶδασιν ὃ ποιοῦσι.

Τότε σὺ κελεύσεις εἰσελθεῖν αὐτὸν, καὶ ἀνακρίνας εἰ μετανοεῖ, καὶ ἄξιός ἐστιν εἰς ἐκκλησίαν ὅλως παραδεχθῆναι, στιβώσας αὐτὸν ἡμέρας νηστειῶν κατὰ τὸ ἁμάρτημα, ἐβδομάδας δύο, ἢ τρεῖς, ἢ πέντε, ἢ ἑπτὰ, οὕτως αὐτὸν ἀπόλυσον, εἰπὼν αὐτῷ ὅσα ἀρμόζει ἡμαρτηκότι εἰς νοθεσίαν ἐπιπλήσσοντα διδάσκειν καὶ παραινεῖν, ὅπως μείνῃ παρ' ἑαυτῷ ταπεινοφρονῶν, καὶ δεόμενος τοῦ Θεοῦ τυχεῖν αὐτοῦ εὐμενοῦς κ.τ.λ.



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[We should separate the offender for a definite time proportioned to the offence : and then receive the penitent.]

II. 16.

[Migne, P. G., I. 626.]

Φησὶ γὰρ αὐτῷ ὁ Θεός· Εἰ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτῆς πτύων ἐνέπτυσεν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτῆς, οὐκ ἐνετράπη ; ἐπτά ἡμέρας ἀφορισθήτω ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς, καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα εἰσελεύσεται. Οὕτως οὖν καὶ ἡμᾶς δέον ἐστὶ ποιεῖν, τοὺς ἐφ' ἁμαρτίας λέγοντας μετανοεῖν, ἀφορίζειν χρόνον ὠρισμένον κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τοῦ ἁμαρτήματος, ἔπειτα μετανοοῦντας προσλαμβάνεσθαι, ὡς πατέρες υἱούς.

[Method of penance : episcopal absolution by laying on of hands.]

II. 18.

[Migne, P. G., I. 632.]

Τοὺς δὲ ἡμαρτηκότας νουθέτει, καὶ στιβῶν ἐν τῇ νηστείᾳ ἐν τῇ ἀφέσει ἐλάφρυνον, καὶ προσκλαύσαντα εἰσδέχου, πάσης τῆς ἐκκλησίας ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ δεομένης, καὶ χειροθετήσας αὐτον ἔα λοιπὸν εἶναι ἐν τῷ ποιμνίῳ.

[Bishops have power of loosing and binding.]

II. 18.

[Migne, P. G., I. 630.]

Πάντων οὖν φροντιζέτω ὁ ἐπίσκοπος καὶ τῶν μὴ ἡμαρτηκότων, ἵνα μείνωσιν ἀναμάρτητοι, καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτανόντων, ἵνα μετανοῶσι· λέγει γὰρ ὁ κύριος πρὸς ἡμᾶς· ὁρᾶτε μὴ καταφρονήσητε ἑνὸς τῶν μικρῶν τούτων· καὶ τοῖς μετανοοῦσιν ἄφεσιν διδόναι· χρὴ ἅμα γὰρ τῷ εἰπεῖν τινα τῶν πλημμελησάντων· γνησίᾳ διαθέσει ἡμάρτηκοτα τῷ κυρίῳ, ἀποκρίνεται τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα, καὶ κύριος ἀφήκέ σοι τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, θάρσει· οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνης· γνώριζε οὖν, ὦ ἐπίσκοπε, τὸ ἀξίωμα σοῦ. ὅτι ὡς τοῦ δεσμεῖν ἐκκληρώσω τὴν ἐξουσίαν, οὕτω καὶ τοῦ λύειν. ἐξουσίαν οὖν ἔχων τοῦ λύειν γνώριζε σεαυτὸν καὶ ἀξίως τοῦ τόπου σοῦ ἐν τῷ δὲ τῷ βίῳ ἀναστρέφου.

[The bishop's office of reconciliation.]

II. 20.

[Migne, P. G., I. 635.]

Οὕτως οὖν ὑπήκοος γίνου καὶ σὺ, ὦ ἐπίσκοπε, ἐκζητῶν τὸ ἀπολωλὸς, κατευθύνων τὸ πεπλανημένον ἐπιστρέφων τὸ ἀφεστός· ἐξουσίαν γὰρ ἔχεις ἐπιστρέφειν, καὶ ἀποστέλλειν τεθραυσμένους ἐν ἀφέσει· διὰ σοῦ ὁ Σωτὴρ λέγει τῷ παρειμένῳ ἐν ἁμαρτίαις· “Ἀφέωνται σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι. Ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέ σε· πορεύου εἰς εἰρήνην.”

[The bishop who will not forgive may not expect to be forgiven.]

II. 21.

[Migne, P. G., I. 640.]

ὡς καὶ διὰ τῆς εὐχῆς ἡμᾶς ἐπαίδευσε λέγειν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν· “Ἀφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφίεμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν. Ἐὰν οὖν μὴ ἀφήτε τοῖς ἡμαρτηκόσι, πῶς ὑμεῖς λήψεσθε τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν ; οὐχὶ τοῦναντίον ἑαυτοὺς δεσμεύετε, λέγοντες ἀφίεναι, καὶ μὴ ἀφιέντες ; οὐ τῷ ἑαυτῶν στόματι ἐναντιωθήσεσθε, λέγοντες ἀφίεναι, καὶ μὴ

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ἀφιέντες; γινώσκετε γὰρ ὅτι ὁ τὸν μὴ ἀδικήσαντα ἐκβάλλων, ἢ τὸν ἐπιστρέφοντα μὴ προσδεχόμενος, φονεὺς τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐστι, καὶ αἷμα ἐκχέει, ὡς Καὶν Ἀβελ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, καὶ τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ βοῶν πρὸς Θεὸν ἐκζητηθήσεται· δίκαιος γὰρ ἀδίκως φονευθεὶς ὑπὸ τινος, παρὰ Θεῷ ἐν ἀναπαύσει ἔσται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα· ὡσαύτως καὶ ὁ ματαίως ἀφορισθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου.

[*Idolaters may be reconciled, if truly penitent. Not so the calculating sinner who tempts God as not punishing the guilty.*]

II. 23.

[Migne, P. G., I. 649.]

Μείζων εἰδωλολατρίας οὐκ ἔστιν ἁμαρτία· εἰς Θεὸν γὰρ ἐστι δυσσέβεια. ἀλλ' ὅμως καὶ αὕτη διὰ γνησίας μετανοίας συγκεχώρηται. Ἐὰν δέ τις ἐκ παρατάξεως ἁμαρτάνῃ, πειράζων τὸν Θεόν, ὡς μὴ ἐπεξιόντα τοῖς πονηροῖς, ὁ τοιοῦτος ἄφεςιν οὐχ ἔξει, κἂν λέγῃ παρ' ἑαυτῷ, Ὅσια μοι γένοιτο, ὅτι πορεύσομαι ἐν τῇ ἀναστροφῇ τῆς καρδίας μου τῆς πονηρᾶς.

[*Imposition of hands by bishop for absolution.*]

II. 41.

[Migne, P. G., I. 696.]

Οὕτως οὖν καὶ σὺ ποίει, ὦ ἐπίσκοπε· ἀλλ' ὥσπερ τὸν ἐθνικὸν λούσας εἰσδέχῃ μετὰ τὴν διδασκαλίαν, οὕτω καὶ τοῦτον χειροθετήσας, ὡς ἂν μετανοήσας κεκαθαρισμένον, πάντων ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ προσεύχομενων, ἀποκατάστησας αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν ἀρχαίαν αὐτοῦ νομὴν· καὶ ἔσται αὐτῷ ἀντὶ τοῦ λούσματος ἡ χειροθεσία· καὶ γὰρ διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν ἡμετέρων χειρῶν ἐδίδοτο Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον τοῖς πιστεύουσι.

[*The tribunal of the bishop. Cases should, if possible, be settled without a pronouncement of the bishop, which carries Divine authority.*]

II. 47.

[Migne, P. G., I. 708.]

Τὰ δικαστήρια ἡμῶν γινέσθω δευτέρα Σαββάτων ὅπως ἐὰν ἀντιλογία τῇ ἀποφάσει ὑμῶν γένηται ἕως Σαββάτου ἔχοντες ἄδειαν, δυνηθῇτε εὐθύναι τὴν ἀντιλογίαν, καὶ εἰρηνεῦσαι εἰς τὴν κυριακὴν τοὺς διαφερομένους πρὸς ἀλλήλους. Συμπαρέστωσαν δὲ τῷ δικαστηρίῳ καὶ οἱ διάκονοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, ἀπροσωπολήπτως κρίνοντες, ὡς Θεοῦ ἄνθρωποι, μετὰ δικαιοσύνης. Παραγενομένων οὖν ἐκατέρων τῶν προσώπων, καθὼς καὶ ὁ νόμος λέγει, στήσονταί ἐκάτεροι ἐν μέσῳ τῷ κριτηρίῳ οἷς ἐστιν ἡ ἀντιλογία· καὶ ἀκούσαντες αὐτῶν, ὅσιως ἀνενέγκατε τὰς ψήφους σπουδάζοντες αὐτοὺς φίλους ἀμφοτέρους ποιῆσαι, πρὶν ἀποφάσεως τῆς τοῦ ἐπισκόπου, ὅπως μὴ ἐξέλθοι ἐπὶ γῆς κρίσις κατὰ τοῦ ἁμαρτήσαντος· καθότι καὶ ἐν τῷ δικαστηρίῳ σύμψηφον ἔχει καὶ συνίστορα τῆς δίκης τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ.



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[*The bishop in his tribunal is to assign varying penalties according to offence.*]

II. 48.

[Migne, *P. G.*, I. 708.]

Μὴ πάσης δὲ ἁμαρτίας τὴν αὐτὴν ποιεῖσθε ἀπόφασιν ἄλλ' ἐκάστης ἰδίαν· μετὰ πολλῆς φρονήσεως κρίνοντες ἕκαστα τῶν πλημμελημάτων, τὰ τε σμικρὰ, καὶ τὰ μεγάλα, καὶ ἄλλως ἔργου, καὶ λόγου πάλιν ἑτέρως, καὶ προθέσεως, ἢ λοιδορίας, ἢ ὑπολήψεως διαφόρως, καὶ τοὺς μὲν ὑποβαλεῖς μόναίς ἀπειλαῖς, τοὺς δὲ πενήτων χορηγίαις, ἄλλοις δὲ νηστεύαις στιβώσεις, καὶ ἑτέροις ἀφορίσεις, πρὸς τὸ μέγεθος τοῦ ἐγκλήματος αὐτῶν. . . . .

Οὐκοῦν καὶ ὑμεῖς τῶν διαφόρων ἁμαρτημάτων διαφόρους ποιεῖσθε καὶ τὰς τιμωρίας, ἵνα μὴ τις ἀδικία παρεμπεσοῦσα κινήσῃ τὸν Θεὸν πρὸς ἀγανάκτησιν. Ἡς γὰρ ἂν ἀδίκου κρίσεως μεσῖται γένησθε, ταύτης καὶ τὸν ἀπὸ Θεοῦ λήψεσθε μισθόν· Ὡς γὰρ κρίματι κρίνετε, κριθήσεσθε.

[*Prayer at the consecration of a bishop that he may have power to remit sins, and to loose every bond.*]

VIII. 5. [Migne, *P. L.*, I. 1073; Achelis, *T. und U.*, vi. 4, p. 46.]

δὸς αὐτῷ, δέσποτα παντοκράτορ, διὰ τοῦ χριστοῦ σου τὴν μετουσίαν τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, ὥστε ἔχειν ἐξουσίαν ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας κατὰ τὴν ἐντολὴν σου, διδόναι κλήρους κατὰ τὸ πρόσταγμά σου, λύειν δὲ πάντα σύνδεσμον κατὰ τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἣν ἔδωκας τοῖς ἀποστόλοις.

[*The dismissal of the penitents in the Liturgy.*]

VIII. 9.

[Migne, *P. G.*, I. 1085.]

Καὶ ὁ διάκονος λεγέτω· Ἀπολύεσθε οἱ ἐν μετανοίᾳ. Καὶ προστιθέτω· Μήτις τῶν μὴ δυναμένων προελθέτω.

## FROM THE DECIAN PERSECUTION TO A.D. 300

Rigorism  
passes,  
A.D. 252.

IN the preceding chapter it has been indicated that the date A.D. 252 may be taken as marking the transition from the period of rigorism to the full claim of the Catholic Church of Jesus Christ to exercise her Lord's commission even in the matter of the capital sins. Henceforward there was to be no category of sins of which it should be said that they might find no remission in this earthly life, though the mercies of God might be reserved for them at the last great day. Penitence for long years might be required: in this case or in that communion might be denied till the passing soul was already catching glimpses of the life beyond: but no longer would the Church watch as from afar the dying anguish of sad and desolate penitents yearning without present alleviation for the mercies of the Lord; passing into the darkness of the shadow of death "unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled."

The main landmarks of the history may be recalled. In A.D. 251 largely attended provincial councils had been held at Carthage and at Rome, which had sanctioned the reconciliation of all penitent apostates before death overtook them. In A.D. 252 was held Cyprian's Second Council of Carthage, which in the expectation of a renewed fury of persecution under Gallus admitted all the penitent lapsed to present communion that they might be the better fortified for what lay before them. In A.D. 252 was also held the Council of Antioch, which gathered together all the Churches of the East in an almost unhoped-for unanimity of mercy.

Import-  
ance of  
the change.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of this dramatic change of attitude in the history of the Church. It should not be taken as necessarily involving a condemnation of her former strictness. The exigencies of one age give place to the exigencies of another. If the Church is permitted to wield the keys of the kingdom of heaven, she adapts their employment to the present needs of the souls for whom Christ died. None the less the change of attitude is startling; startling alike in the completeness of its contrast, and in the universality of its adoption.

From A.D.  
252 abso-  
lution for  
capital  
sins.

It may then be said that from the year A.D. 252 the Church assumed her new position towards the capital sins. Penance should be required: but absolution should be accorded. But while this statement expresses an important general truth, it is



not to be understood that diverse opinions ceased to find utterance, or to influence action. Not only did the sect of Novatian draw to its own schismatic unity large numbers of worthy Christian persons, but within the borders of the Church we catch echoes of continued differences. As late as about A.D. 306 the Council of Illiberris shows the Spanish peninsula as still solid for the pre-Decian attitude, while all the rest of the Church has moved. As late as A.D. 307–309 under popes Marcellus and Eusebius opposing factions in Rome itself will be found contending as to whether penance should be required from the lapsed, and in their contention guilty of riot and bloodshed. None the less the year A.D. 252 remains the clearest point of time to indicate a great transition.

Yet diverse  
opinions.

The present chapter will investigate the testimony of the period which elapsed from the close of the Decian persecution to the end of the third century. It will deal with the beginnings of the system of penitential stations as shown in the writings of S. Gregory Thaumaturgus. And, passing from Pontus to Syria, it will study the evidence of the Syriac *Didascalia Apostolorum*, the treatise which is now recognised as forming the basis of the first six books of that better-known compilation which bears the title of the *Apostolic Constitutions*.

S. Gregory Thaumaturgus, bishop of Neo-Cæsarea in Pontus from A.D. 233 to A.D. 270, was the bishop of a missionary diocese indeed. The conversion of Pontus was proceeding during the long years of his episcopate, and S. Gregory Nyssen has recorded that when towards the close of his life it was reported to the great bishop of Neo-Cæsarea that there were only seventeen idolaters in his diocese, he remarked that there had been just that number of Christians in it when first he accepted charge.<sup>1</sup> Seventeen Christians at the outset, seventeen pagans at the close! A striking example of that process of missionary advance under a diocesan bishop, of which history takes so little account. Somewhere about A.D. 260 Gregory was addressed by another bishop of Pontus, whose name is not known to us, on the subject of the discipline necessary in certain cases. These cases had arisen from the irruption of the Goths and Boradi into Pontus in the reign of Gallienus. The letter which Gregory wrote in reply is usually known as his *Canonical Epistle*. Its full title, as given in the published editions, is “Canonical Epistle of S. Gregory, Archbishop of Neo-Cæsarea, the Wonderworker, concerning those who in the incursion of the barbarians ate meats offered to idols, or transgressed in certain other matters.” As it now stands it contains eleven chapters or canons. Of these the eleventh gives an account of the various gradations of penance which were in use. This chapter may well have been added at a date later

S. Gregory  
Thauma-  
turgus.

His  
Canonical  
Epistle.

<sup>1</sup> S. Gregory Nyssen, *De Vita S. Gregorii Thaumaturgi* (Migne, P. L., XLVI. 954). τοσούτους καταλείπει τοὺς εἰδωολάτρας τῷ μετ' αὐτὸν ἐκδεχομένῳ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, ὁσους αὐτὸς Χριστιανούς ὑπεδέξατο.

than the main body of the epistle by way of explaining the various indications of penance which are found in the epistle. Of the two leading Greek canonists, Balsamon accepts the chapter and comments on it, while Zonaras refrains from comment. It will be well to give this eleventh chapter first. If it represents a system a little more technical and definite than that which S. Gregory's letter requires, it does explain the references of the letter, and may be taken as describing with correctness the system which took shape not later than the end of the third century, and which after that date, as at the Council of Ancyra in A.D. 314, can be referred to as an established and recognised system by such expressions as "the defined grades" (οἱ ὁρισμένοι βαθμοί).

Five grades  
of penance.

"The *Mourning* (ἡ πρόσκλαυσις) is without the portal (πύλης) of the church (ἐκκληρίου), where it behoves the sinner to stand, and to beseech the faithful as they enter to pray for him. The *Hearing* (ἡ ἀκρόασις) is within the portal in the narthex, where it behoves the sinner to stand as long as the catechumens remain, and then to go out thence. For, saith he, when he has heard the Scriptures and the Instructions, let him be put forth and not be counted worthy of the *Prayer*. The *Falling* (ἡ ὑπόπτωσις) is when, taking his stand within the door of the nave he goes forth with the catechumens. The *Bystanding* (ἡ σύστασις) is when he takes his stand with the faithful, and does not go forth with the catechumens. Last is the *Participation of the Hallowed* (ἡ μέθεξις τῶν ἁγιασμάτων)."

The  
Liturgy.

Its divi-  
sions.

For the intelligent appreciation of these various grades some knowledge of the framework of the ancient liturgies is necessary. Greatly various as these were, they were agreed on certain main lines. The Liturgy, or service of the Eucharist, consisted of two well-defined divisions; an earlier part, to which catechumens were admitted, but at the close of which they had to leave; and a later part containing the *Prayer* or *Prayers* of Consecration, during which only the faithful were permitted to be present. The ordinary Latin terms which came to be employed in the West for these two divisions of the Liturgy are (a) *missa catechumenorum* and (b) *missa fidelium*. In the *missa catechumenorum* came the lessons from the holy Scriptures which we call the Epistle and Gospel, and also frequently a third lesson from the Old Testament. Also in this portion of the service came the Sermon, Instruction, or Homily. During all this, the "Scriptures and the Instructions," the catechumens, although unbaptized, were permitted to remain.

The  
*Mourners*.

The grades of penance distinguished in the eleventh canon of S. Gregory's canonical letter are now readily intelligible. In the lowest rank, where great offenders are humbling themselves, but the Church as yet makes no sign, the *Mourners* stand outside the outer portal of the as yet generally humble house of prayer (ἐκκληρίον). They may have no part or lot in the Christian



service of GOD. While the unbaptized catechumen, the convert under instruction, may pass within the portal to be instructed and edified, they, the *Mourners*, may not. They are there because they hope in time to persuade the Church to find a place for them. In the garb of penitence they waylay the faithful as they pass in to worship, beseeching their intercessions and good offices. It is not difficult to see that this first stage is not so much a grade of penance as the natural expression of the contrition of an Oriental, who as yet can find no recognition of his contrition. And in the body of his letter S. Gregory does not indicate this condition of exclusion by any technical name.

Next come the *Hearers*. Some writers have fallen into the mistake of supposing that the *Hearers* were permitted to be present during the *missa fidelium* and to hear the great Eucharistic Prayer. They were, in fact, only permitted to hear what the catechumens might hear, the "Scriptures and Instructions," and then with the catechumens they were to be put forth. The *Hearer* had found recognition from the Church for his penance. He was accordingly admitted within the outer portal of the church. But he was only admitted just within the outer portal. Between that portal and the inner door opening upon the nave, in what was called the *narthex* or vestibule of the church, he was to take his stand. As he could not remain longer than the catechumens, so too he could not advance farther than the door of the nave.

The next grade is that of the *Falling* or *Kneeling* (ἡ ὑπόπτωσις). When admitted within the nave of the building the penitent does not stand throughout the service in the usual manner of the faithful, but falls in an attitude of submission or abasement. The modern English reader is not to picture a devotee who kneels upright from the knees resting his hands against a desk or ledge in front. The nave of the ancient Christian church is a bare space without seat or desk or kneeler. The *Faller* assumes an attitude which to the Eastern is simple and natural. He sinks upon his knees, sitting back well-nigh upon his heels. He will, perhaps, bow his forehead to the dust, with his hands stretched forth beyond his head. He will from time to time prostrate himself, lying nearly if not quite at full length. He is a *Faller*, who, admitted within the nave of the Christian church, will not assume to stand as the Christian faithful are wont to stand during the sacred service. But notwithstanding his humility of bearing no place can yet be found for him during the Eucharistic Prayer. He too goes forth with the catechumens.

The next grade is that of the *Bystanders*. The penitent now stands. He is also permitted to remain during the *missa fidelium*. He is now first allowed to have his part in the *Prayers*, the great Eucharistic Prayers. He is henceforth debarred from nothing but the actual communion.

Com-  
munion.

And lastly, when all the grades of penitence are passed, he participates in the *Hallowed Things*, and is no more counted in the ranks of the penitents.

The grades  
not in-  
vented by  
S. Gregory.  
Grounded  
on the  
system in  
use for  
catechu-  
mens.

There is here sketched out the elaborate system of five grades or stations, which was for a time at least to give a special character to the penitential observance of the Asian provinces. It would be a mistake to understand that the grades were invented by S. Gregory the Wonderworker, or that indeed their first purpose was for penitents at all. The groundwork of the system is to be found in the ordered provision made for catechumens, who appear to have been frequently graded into at least two grades, one of these being the grade of *Hearers*, admitted to stand in the narthex, and the other the grade of *Fallers*, admitted to prostration in the nave.<sup>1</sup> Of the other grades mentioned in the eleventh canon of S. Gregory's letter, the highest is that of the faithful in full communion, and the lowest that of offenders not yet received or recognised by the Church at all. The remaining grade, that of the *Bystanders*, who were permitted to remain during the *missa fidelium* when no unbaptized persons could remain, but were not yet permitted to communicate with the faithful, is probably a grade created for penitents.

S. Gregory  
builds up  
a system  
of discip-  
line.

It may now be of service to consider the references to gradations of penance which occur in the body of S. Gregory's epistle, that is to say, in the ten chapters or canons which are commonly accepted as the genuine work of St. Gregory. It may first be noticed that S. Gregory, who is throughout the epistle seriously endeavouring to arrive at a fair and reasonable discipline, appeals for this purpose industriously (1) to Holy Scripture and (2) to considerations of reason and equity; but never (3) to precedents of former times or (4) to the practice of contemporary Churches.

<sup>1</sup> Origen (*Contra Celsum*, III. 51) describes two ranks of catechumens, of which the first is "of those freshly beginning, and entering, and who have not yet accepted the symbol of purification" (τάγμα τῶν ἔρτι ἀρχομένων, καὶ εἰσαγομένων, καὶ οὐδέπω τὸ σύμβολον τοῦ ἀποκεκαθάρθαι ἀνειληφότων); while the other is "of those who have determined to the best of their ability to have no other will but for what is approved by Christians" (οὐκ ἄλλο τι βούλεσθαι, ἢ τὰ Χριστιανοῖς δοκοῦντα). The word ἀκροαταί, hearers, is used by Origen of both these classes of inquirers, before they are thus divided. Tertullian mentions the *audientes* as contrasted with the *intincti* or baptized (*An alius est intinctis Christus, alius audientibus?* *De Pœnitentia*, 6). The fifth canon of the Council of Neo-Cæsarea (A.D. c. 320) rules: "If any catechumen who enters the church and stands in the order of Catechumens be guilty of sin, if he be a kneeler (γόνυ κλίνων) let him become a hearer (ἀκροάσθω) provided he sin no more: but if he sin as a hearer let him be cast out of the church." The ἐνχη τῶν κατηχουμένων of the Council of Laodicea (c. 19) may be taken to indicate the advanced grade.

Funk is not prepared to admit any division of catechumens into classes—*Die Katechumenatsklassen des christlichen Altertums* (*Kirchengeschichtliche Abhandlungen und Untersuchungen*: Paderborn, 1897, I. 209). *Zur Frage von den Katechumenatsklassen* (*K. Abh. u. Unt.*, III. 57). Funk also contends that the *Fallers* were permitted to remain during the *Prayer*—*Die Bussstationen im christlichen Altertum* (*K. Abh. u. Unt.*, I. 204).



In other words, he is building up a system of discipline entirely at first hand. The fact that he is doing so, and doing it in a way to invite imitation is doubtless the reason why he is applied to by this neighbouring bishop of the same province of Pontus, who has himself as yet no such system, but is finding the need to exercise some discipline. That it is a system already definitely in shape both as regards the gradations of penalty and the methods of procedure is apparent from the statement made by Gregory in the fifth chapter, that he is sending his colleague Euphrosynus to the bishop, whom he is addressing with the object that he may indicate "in accordance with the system here (*κατὰ τον ἐνθάδε τύπον*), (1) in whose cases to admit accusations, and (2) whom it is necessary to proclaim excluded from the *Prayers*."

At Neo-Cæsarea.

This is highly interesting. Somewhere about the year A.D. 260, or within the decade following the Decian persecution, there is beginning to grow up, not in the recognised centres of Church life, but in a far-off missionary diocese of Pontus, a graded system of discipline, as yet unknown elsewhere in the Catholic Church; a system which owes its inception to the genius of a great organising bishop. S. Gregory the Wonderworker was clearly one of those exceptional men who impress and dominate their generation. His memory and his influence still pervaded the province of Pontus when some eighty years later the youthful Basil was being educated in this same district of Neo-Cæsarea: and of the direct relation between S. Gregory's system and the canonical letters of S. Basil we shall have occasion to take notice farther on. The interesting point which calls for notice here is that in A.D. 260 the system can be referred to at Neo-Cæsarea as the *ἐνθάδε τύπος*, the *system here*.

And now for a more detailed consideration of Gregory's letter. At the outset (*c. i.*) he deals with the case of Christian women who had been taken captive by the barbarian invaders, and had been overborne by them to concubinage. He distinguishes between those whose former lives had been entirely pure, and of whom it was right to infer that their recent loss of chastity was involuntary; and those who had offended previously, and whose later fornication was in consequence open to suspicion as perhaps voluntarily admitted. With such as these, he says, we ought not readily to communicate in the *Prayers*. Referring to canon xi. we find that those who do not share in the *Prayers*, that is to say, in the great Eucharistic Prayer, leave the church with the catechumens: and that of these excluded persons the higher grade was that of *ὑπόπτωσις*, of the *Fallers*, who stood within the door of the nave, while the *ἀκούοντες*, the *Hearers*, were only admitted to the narthex.

Gregory's letter in detail.

Next he deals with the sins of cupidity which had stained the Christian community in a time of violence. He holds (*c. iii.*) that any property not a man's own which had come into his

hands at such a time should be regarded as *Anathema*, or devoted to God. There is (c. iv.) the clear duty of restoring any article belonging to a brother of which he had been deprived in the raid. Those, too (c. v.), who had found articles which others had lost were not to regard them as their own, and so to become Boradi and Goths to their brethren. It is with reference to such offenders that Euphrosynus is being despatched that he may be of service by showing in accordance with the system in force at Neo-Cæsarea against whom to admit accusations, and whom it is necessary to exclude from the *Prayers*. Next (c. vi.) comes the case of those who had seized their fellow-Christians when escaping from their captivity with the barbarians, and had forcibly detained them, presumably as slaves. Concerning such he says that inquiry should be set on foot, lest thunderbolts should fall on those who do such things. This is somewhat rhetorical: but it is, perhaps, implied that the commission of inquiry will set on foot the necessary discipline. In chap. vii. Gregory deals with the case of those Christians who, being in the hands of the barbarians, have accompanied their masters as captives, and forgetful that they were natives of Pontus and Christians, have acted as barbarians, and either have been guilty of putting to death some of their own people, or have betrayed paths or houses to barbarians to whom these would not otherwise have been known. S. Gregory naturally regards these cases as having the character of extreme gravity. He says that it is necessary to repel such persons even from the *Hearing* "until some common counsel regarding them shall approve itself to the saints assembled, and before them to the Holy Ghost." This decision is interesting in a high degree. From chap. xi. we understand that those excluded from the *Hearing* might not even like the *Hearers* be present in the narthex of the church during that earlier portion of the Liturgy to which the catechumens were admitted: but that they were to stand outside the exterior portal of the church, and there to beseech the faithful as they entered that they would pray for them. In chap. xi. this lowest grade of penance is described by the technical term *πρόσκλαυσις*, *Mourning*, but in chap. vii. Gregory only refers to it as exclusion from the *Hearing*. As regards the duration of such penance, the possibility of admission to superior grades of penance, and also on the question whether absolution could in such cases ever be accorded in this life, S. Gregory ventures on no pronouncement. He desiderates the guidance of the Holy Ghost, which he hopes will be found in the common counsel which shall in due course approve itself to the assembled faithful.

Next (c. viii.) he deals with the case of those who during the barbarian inroad have broken into the houses of their fellow-Christians. In such cases he distinguishes between those who are convicted on the accusation of others, and those who volun-



tarily confess their offence. The distinction will become familiar in later times. Those who are brought to account on the charge of others are not to be considered worthy even of the *Hearing*. Those who accuse themselves, and give themselves up are to fall prostrate in the grade of the *ὑποστρεφόντες*. It is to be noticed here that while Gregory does not in *c. viii.* employ a technical word for the grade of those excluded from the *Hearing*, the grade which is styled *πρόσκλησις* in *c. xi.*, he does in *c. viii.* employ a technical word for the grade which in *c. xi.* is styled *ὑπόπτωσις*. Using the verb of *ὑπόπτωσις*, he speaks of this form of penance as in the recognised grade of the *ὑποστρεφόντες* (ἐν τῇ τῶν ὑποστρεφόντων τάξει ὑποπίπτειν).

Next in *c. ix.* Gregory makes a definite pronouncement as regards persons who have found and kept plundered articles left behind by the spoilers, whether in the fields or in their houses. In such cases he decides that if they are convicted on the charge of others they are to take their place among the *Fallers* (ἐν τοῖς ὑποπίπτουσιν): but if they confess and give themselves up, they may be held worthy even of the *Prayer*. In the latter case, that is to say, they may remain with the faithful to the end of the Liturgy, only communion being withheld from them.

The tenth canon or chapter lays down that persons so doing penance are not to retain any sort of unlawful gain: or to charge the owners a price for the indication, or custody, or finding of their goods. Here is the familiar principle of the moral theology of the eighth commandment, that penance in this subject matter involves entire restitution. The system of grades of penance became in a short time so widely spread in the Asian provinces, and it claims so important a place in the history of Penance, that these indications of the inception of the system are of high value. S. Gregory found existing in the practice of the Church certain great facts which served as the foundation of his system. First there existed, it would seem everywhere, the division of the Liturgy into two parts, the *missa catechumenorum* and the *missa fidelium*. In the case of every person admitted to the Christian service it had to be decided whether he could be allowed to be present during the whole service, or only during the *missa catechumenorum*. Next, the distinction of *Hearers* and *Fallers* probably marks a recognised distinction of progress among the *catechumens*, or unbaptized persons under instruction. Next, the sight of penitents bewailing their fall outside the portal of the church building, but as yet unreceived and unrecognised, was doubtless all too familiar in the days which followed persecutions. Finally, the keeping of penitents for a time without communion, even when admitted to be present with the faithful during the Eucharistic *Prayers*, was probably already an admitted practice.

From this material, as it would seem, S. Gregory built up his system of graded penance; and the eleventh chapter of his canonical

letter, whether it be due to Gregory himself, or to another writer shortly after Gregory's time, shows the developed system as it will now be found in force in the provinces of Asia Minor. There are five technical grades or stations of penance, of which one is a grade of outside suppliant, three are grades of penitents, and the last is the grade of restoration.

The grades  
recapitu-  
lated.

These grades may here be recapitulated :—

1. *The Mourners*.—These, in truth outsiders seeking recognition as penitents, come to be spoken of as the lowest grade of penitents. Their place is outside the outer portal of the church.
2. *The Hearers*.—These stand in the narthex, outside the door of the nave, during the *missa catechumenorum* only.
3. *The Fallers*, who fall in self-abasement when admitted among the Christian faithful in the nave. These, too, leave after the *missa catechumenorum*.
4. *The Bystanders*, who remain throughout the Liturgy, but do not communicate.
5. *The Faithful*, among whom the restored penitent takes his place for communion.

They are  
due to S.  
Gregory.

Theodore Balsamon, the mediæval canonist, who was for some years Chartophylax of S. Sophia, and who became Patriarch of Antioch in A.D. 1193, dying in A.D. 1200, has commented on the canonical letter of S. Gregory. His comment on the eleventh chapter is as follows: "This saint has outlined five places of penitents, but has not declared the duration of their exercise, nor the sins for which the penance was defined. But the great Basil in his *Canonical Epistles* has handed these down with precision. But even he referred the task of assessing the penalties to the episcopal discretion."

Terms of  
penance not  
assigned by  
him.

Balsamon rightly seizes the outlining of the five places of penitents as the feature which is most characteristic of the system of S. Gregory. The next development of the penitential system by the assignment of extended terms, often of many years, in each of the grades assigned, will not be long in finding place. But in S. Gregory's time it has not yet found place. The episcopal discretion of which Balsamon speaks was happily present at all times to temper the possibilities of rigorism.

The *Didas-  
calia Aposto-  
lorum*.

The *Didascalía Apostolorum* is a treatise which has only become known to scholars in comparatively recent times. It is a treatise which presumably had a Greek original, but the Greek original is not in our hands. Two translations are known; the Syriac, of which there are now several MSS.; and the Latin, which was recovered by Hauler from a palimpsest at Verona in A.D. 1896, but which preserves only fragments amounting to perhaps two-fifths of the whole. Till very recently the only MS. of the Syriac

The MSS.



version available was the *Codex Sangermanensis* 38 (s) in the National Library at Paris. This was published by Lagarde in A.D. 1854.<sup>1</sup> There are now known besides, a MS. brought by Dr. Rendel Harris from Mesopotamia (h), and published with some collations by Mrs. Gibson in A.D. 1903,<sup>2</sup> another in the University Library at Cambridge (c), and another in the Museo Borgia at Rome (b).

It is on the Syriac MSS. that we have mainly to base. Syriac is, however, a language known to but few, and it is only since the recent appearance of careful translations that scholars generally have been able to avail themselves adequately of this valuable document. In A.D. 1902 M. Nau published a French translation.<sup>3</sup> In A.D. 1903 Mrs. Gibson published besides the volume of *Horæ Semiticæ* containing the Syriac text of the Mesopotamian MS., another volume giving an English translation of that text.<sup>4</sup>

In A.D. 1904 Achelis and Flemming produced in the *Texte und Untersuchungen* a work of great thoroughness containing a German translation with notes and dissertations.<sup>5</sup> The citations given above are from Mrs. Gibson's translation.

To any one familiar with the *Apostolic Constitutions* it is at once evident that the *Didascalia* and the *Constitutions* stand in the closest relationship to each other. It is here sufficient to state that it is now one of the assured results of scholarship that the *Didascalia* is the foundation of the first six books of the *Apostolic Constitutions*. Sometimes in the *Constitutions* the material of the *Didascalia* is expanded; sometimes it is condensed. But it is certainly the *Didascalia* which is the basis of the *Constitutions*, and not *vice versa*.

The *Didascalia* is the foundation of the first six books of the *Apostolic Constitutions*.

This being so, inquiry may now be made as to the date and place of origin of the *Didascalia*. The document assumes an apostolic origin, and professes to emanate from a council of the Apostles at Jerusalem. It is possible that the *Didascalia* hands on ancient and even apostolic traditions, and it is also possible that the treatise as we have it embodies sections of considerable age at the time of compilation. A theory was put forward at the Catholic Congress at Freiburg in Switzerland in A.D. 1897 by

<sup>1</sup> *Didascalia Apostolorum syriace*: Lipsiæ, 1854.

<sup>2</sup> *Horæ Semiticæ*, No. 1. *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac edited . . . by Margaret Dunlop Gibson*: London, C. J. Clay & Sons, 1903.

<sup>3</sup> *Ancienne Littérature canonique syriaque*, fasc. I. *La Didascalie, c'est-à-dire enseignement catholique des douze apôtres et des saints disciples de notre Sauveur*, trad. par F. Nau: Paris, 1902.

<sup>4</sup> *Horæ Semiticæ*, No. 2. *The Didascalia Apostolorum in English, translated from the Syriac by Margaret Dunlop Gibson*: London, C. J. Clay & Sons, 1903.

<sup>5</sup> *Die Syrische Didaskalia, übersetzt und erklärt von Hans Achelis und Johs. Flemming*: Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1904. The four dissertations are headed: (1) *The Text of the Syrian Didaskalia*, (2) *A Christian Congregation of the Third Century*, (3) *The New Testament in the Didascalia*, (4) *The Origin of the Didascalia*.

M. Holzhey that the *Didascalía* was the outcome of repeated recensions, with the *Didache* as the starting-point. M. Holzhey in fact, endeavoured to distinguish three separate recensions. But the theory in this definite form fails to commend itself to Achelis, to Harnack, or to Bardenhewer.

It may be assigned to Syria in the third century.

Assuming the *Didascalía* as we have it to be mainly or largely the work of one time and place, internal evidence points to Syria in the third century. As regards place there are in the neighbourhood of the writer Jewish Christians, although the congregation addressed is Gentile. This indicates some place not far from Palestine, perhaps in Syria, or in the Arabian tract to the south-east. The place is a considerable town, where all the members of the Church applying for assistance will not be personally known to the bishop. But it is not so considerable but that the Christians can assemble in one congregation. The tone of the *Didascalía* is too provincial, and too little suggestive of the great currents of Church life to indicate as likely the cities on the Mediterranean coast. Accordingly Achelis would look for some town in Cœlesyria, while Harnack suggests some place like Bostra on the Arabian side.

As regards time the third century is certainly indicated. Harnack discerns the use in the *Didascalía* of the *Didache*, the Ignatian Letters, the *Gospel of Peter*, and the *Acts of Paul*, and decides against any date before A.D. 200. The use of the *Didascalía* by S. Epiphanius as the "Word of God," and its employment by the writer of the *Opus Imperfectum in Matthæum* equally bar any date after A.D. 300. The students of the history of Penance will be able to apply their results to narrow these indications. It was not till the Council of Antioch in A.D. 252 that any general policy of mercy which included the lapsed could have been so confidently put forward in a Syrian church as is done by the *Didascalía*. Fabius of Antioch, who summoned that council, had himself inclined to the severity of Novatian. The strong party of protesting rigorists, not Novatianist schismatics, but members of the Church over which the bishop presided, indicate no less certainly the earlier years after the concession of mercy, perhaps A.D. 252–270. After the latter date the policy of mercy may be taken as assured. This indication agrees with the condition of peace in the Church which the book presents, a condition from which its members could look back upon recent martyrdoms, the experience of which might indeed some day recur.

A.D. 252–270.

Contents.

The contents of the *Didascalía* may now be considered. They may be approached from the point of view of the conclusion that somewhere among the Syrian churches, at a date synchronising with the activity of S. Gregory the Wonderworker in the province of Pontus, there is found a Christian community or church in which the indications of the *Didascalía* are a living reality.



The first feature which may be noticed is the position of the bishop, and the exalted estimate of the prerogative of binding and loosing which has been committed to him. He is in a position of supremacy and control over the flock. He need not heed the rigorists in the community, for he is the head and they are but the tail. He is the minister of the Divine judgments, and in their exercise is as GOD. He has power to forgive the sins of the fallen, for he fills the place of the Christ.

Position of the bishop.

“ Know thy place that thou art appointed in the semblance of GOD Almighty, and that thou holdest the place of GOD Almighty ; thus sit in the Church and teach, as one who hath power to judge those that sin, in the place of Almighty GOD ; for to you Bishops it is said in the Gospel, that what ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.” <sup>1</sup>

He has power to bind and to loose.

“ Therefore, judge severely, O Bishop, like Almighty GOD, and receive those who repent with compassion like GOD ; and reprove, and beseech, and teach, for even the Lord GOD has promised with oaths pardon to those who have sinned.” <sup>2</sup>

“ Therefore, O Bishop, teach and reprove and loosen by pardon, and know that thy place is that of GOD Almighty, and thou hast received power to forgive sins, for it is said to you Bishops, ‘ All that ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven ; and all that ye shall loose shall be loosed.’ ” <sup>3</sup>

“ Thus obey thou also, O Bishop, visit the one that is lost, and seek the one that has wandered, and restore the one that is far away, because thou hast power to forgive the sins of him that is fallen . . . for thou fillest the place of the Christ.” <sup>3</sup>

Nowhere in the whole course of Christian literature can be found more forcible assertions of the bishop's prerogative to bind and loose than in these passages. And on a point of great interest, the question whether our Lord's commission inheres in the Church, who appoints her ministers for its exercise, or whether it was conveyed to a particular office or order of men, the witness of the *Didascalia* appears to be given to the belief that the commission was conveyed to the office or order of the bishops.

Emphatic claims

for the office or order of the bishops.

So again it is the bishop who is made the physician of Christ's Church to heal the sick.

The bishop is a physician.

“ Thou also, O Bishop, art made the physician of His Church, therefore do not restrain the medicine that thou mayest heal those that are sick in their sins, but cure them by every means. . . . ” <sup>3</sup>

This is interesting in view of the stress laid by modern moralists on the curative side of the confessor's office.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C. 5.

<sup>2</sup> C. 6.

<sup>3</sup> C. 7, in *Cod. Sang.*

<sup>4</sup> Gaume, *Manuel des Confesseurs*, § 29, quoting S. Alphonsus Liguori, S. Charles Borromeo, and S. Francis de Sales.

He casts  
out the  
disobedi-  
ent.

It is the bishop again whose duty it is to cast out the disobedient.

“Because the Lord hath said unto you, O Bishops, that henceforth ye receive not that man into the Church as a Christian, and be not partakers with him.”<sup>1</sup>

He recon-  
ciles the  
penitent.

Lastly, it is the bishop, and, it would seem the bishop alone, who lays his hands on the penitent in due course to effect his reconciliation.<sup>2</sup>

Presby-  
ters.

The bishop is thus shown in the *Didascalía* as the supreme ruler and controller of his church, exercising a Divine authority in binding and loosing which has been conveyed to his office. There are, however, presbyters in the church as well as the bishop, for though the clergy are summarised as “the Bishop and the Deacons,”<sup>3</sup> the “Elders and Deacons” are required to attend when the bishop holds a formal court.<sup>4</sup>

Policy of  
compas-  
sion.

One of the chief features of the *Didascalía* is its repeated and earnest insistence on the policy of compassion to the penitent sinner, a policy which is sure to find many rigorist opponents, but is none the less the bishop's clear duty. There is indeed in the fifth chapter a statement of the Christian requirement of holiness in the baptized, which might almost seem a statement of the ancient severity accidentally left unaltered, but which is rather a recital of what should be the normal attitude of the Christian, to which expression is first given before clemency to the sinner is urged. It may be compared with the similar statement in the *Shepherd* of Hermas.<sup>5</sup>

Normally  
the Chris-  
tian is un-  
fallen.

“For we do not believe, brethren, that when a man goeth down to the water, he will again do the abominable and impure works of the heathen and the depraved; for this is manifest and known to all men that every one who doeth evil things after having received baptism, is already condemned to the Gehenna of fire.”<sup>6</sup>

Bishop's  
first duty  
severity.

Such being the normal attitude of the Christian Church towards the *fidelis* who has fallen into grave sin, it is not surprising to find that the duty of the bishop in the first instance is severity. And the severity must take a definite form which calls for the attention of the student. The sinner must first be cast out of the church; and this appears to involve a formal expulsion from the church building.

Expulsion  
from church  
building.

“Thus therefore do that thy people may learn and be wise, and also he that sinneth may not perish utterly, but that thou mayest look to him that hath sinned, be angry with him,

<sup>1</sup> C. 10. Mrs. Gibson translates *as Christians*, giving *as a Christian* in a note as the reading of *Cod. Sang.*

<sup>2</sup> C. 7. See *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> C. 5.

<sup>4</sup> C. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Hermas, *Shepherd*, *Mand.*, iv. 3.

<sup>6</sup> C. 5.



and command them to put him out. And when he is put out, be ye not angry with him, and contend with him, but let them keep him outside of the church, and then let them go in and make supplication for him. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

Without this expulsion the requirements of justice would not be met.

“Look also at Miriam the sister of Moses, when she had spoken against Moses, and afterwards she repented and was thought worthy of forgiveness, it was said by the Lord, ‘If her father had but spit in her face, would she not have been ashamed and separated for seven days without the camp, and then she would have come in?’ Thus also it is required of you to act towards those who promise to repent of their sins. Put them out of the Church, as it is proper for their faults, and afterwards receive them as a merciful father.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus, although the writer is about to insist on the righteousness and duty of clemency, he is clear that it should be preceded by a definite act of severity.

The act of putting forth the sinner may be compared with the contemporary instruction of S. Gregory the Wonderworker in Pontus in the case of those who had had part in the slaughter or betrayal of their brethren that such persons should be expelled even from the Hearing “until some common counsel regarding them shall approve itself to the saints assembled, and before them to the Holy Ghost.”<sup>2</sup> In Syria, however, the putting forth appears to have been required not only in the very gravest cases, but in all.

After the exercise of due severity there comes the place of mercy. The bishop will meet with opposition.<sup>3</sup> It might be supposed that the persons referred to were Novatianist sectaries. This is not so. These persons were members of the bishop’s own flock.

Next comes the place of mercy. Opposition.

“For it is not required of thee, O Bishop, that being the head thou shouldest listen to the tail, that is to say, to the layman, to the quarrelsome man who delights in the destruction of another, but look thou only at the command of the Lord God. . . .”<sup>3</sup>

As has already been noted, the serious opposition of these persons in a Catholic community in Syria in the third century may be taken as narrowing the date of the treatise to the twenty years following the Council of Antioch.

The bishop is to follow the example of God, Who “calls even sinners to repentance, and gives them hope.”<sup>3</sup> The bishop, who fills the place of the Christ, is to “visit the one that is lost, and seek the one that has wandered, and restore the one that is far

Bishop will call sinners to repentance.

<sup>1</sup> C. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Can. Ep.*, c. vii.

<sup>3</sup> C. 6.

away.”<sup>1</sup> He has “power to forgive the sins of him that has fallen.” He, as the physician of Christ’s Church is not to restrain the medicine of his healing. If the sinner be harshly repelled, the bishop will be guilty of his ruin. If the Lord teaches the prayer, “Forgive us our debts and our sins as we also forgive our debtors,” the bishop must not himself expect forgiveness, if he do not exercise his power of forgiveness.<sup>1</sup> Such severity amounts to murder; “for he who puts any one out of the Church without mercy, what else does he do but murder bitterly, and shed blood without pity?”<sup>1</sup>

No sins  
excluded.

The scope of the bishop’s mercy is not limited in the *Didascalia* by any gravity of sin. The writer recalls the forgiveness of Manasseh, and remarks that “although there is no sin worse than the worship of idols, yet a place for repentance was given.”<sup>1</sup> He cites the narrative of the woman taken in adultery, and our Lord’s “neither do I condemn thee”;<sup>2</sup> and then says, “In this therefore let our Saviour and King and God be to you a sign, O Bishops.” In claiming a place of repentance for the lapsed the writer is careful to point out that the calculated sin of Amon which presumed on God’s mercy failed to find it.<sup>3</sup>

Procedure  
of recon-  
ciliation.

(1) Expul-  
sion.

(2) Suppli-  
cation of  
faithful.

(3) Exami-  
nation by  
bishop.

(4) Assign-  
ment of  
penance.

(5) Fulfil-  
ment of  
penance.

(6) Solemn  
reconcilia-  
tion.

The procedure of this Syrian church in the third century for the reconciliation of grave offenders has several marked features. First, as has been seen, on the bishop’s instruction, the person is to be cast out of the church, the action taken being to expel him formally from the church building, thrusting him outside its portals. The faithful then, leaving the offender outside, are “to go in and make supplication for him. Upon such supplication being made the bishop is “to command him (the offender) to come in.” The bishop is himself to question the offender as to his penitence—“thyself ask him if he repents.” If the replies are deemed by the bishop satisfactory, “if he is worthy to be received into the Church,” the bishop is then to assign the penance. He is to “appoint him days of fasting according to his fault, two, or three, or five, or seven weeks.” Such assignment is to be accompanied by suitable reproof and exhortation. The penitent is to be instructed to make “supplication in the days of fasting, that he may be found worthy of the forgiveness of sins.” The interview then closes, and the penance assigned has to be entered upon. When the penance has been fulfilled, the penitent is ripe for reconciliation.

“When a sinner repents and weeps, receive him; and when the people have prayed for him, lay (thy hands) upon him, and allow him thenceforth to be in the Church.”<sup>4</sup>

This may all be best understood of the solemnity of reconciliation: (1) the penitent is to come forward expressing his penitence

<sup>1</sup> C. 7, in *Cod. Sang.*

<sup>2</sup> An early use of the *pericope* of the adulteress.

<sup>3</sup> C. 7, in *Cod. Sang.*

<sup>4</sup> C. 7.



by weeping, (2) the people, that is to say, the *fideles*, are to pray for him, (3) the bishop is to lay his hands upon the person, thus solemnly giving effect to his power of forgiveness, and (4) the person is thenceforth allowed "to be in the Church." Such, then, was the course of reconciliation in the case of a penitent offender. The impenitent offender. Offenders, however, were not always penitent or always willing to obey the godly admonitions of their bishops. What was to be done with the recalcitrant? The bishop was to reprove the offender before all the Church, and if he did not hear the Church, "let him be counted unto thee as a heathen and as a publican."<sup>1</sup> It seems to be implied that the Church had an opportunity of expressing agreement with the bishop's reproof, though this may have been only by silent support.

"Not even the heathen or the wicked publicans dost thou receive into the Church, nor make thyself partaker with them, unless they first repent."<sup>1</sup>

The argument appears to be that without repentance a fallen Christian must *a fortiori* be refused reception. Again,

"if thou see a person who does not wish to repent, but has completely cut off hope of himself, then with grief and sorrow cut him off and cast him out of the Church."

It would thus appear that every grave offender whether penitent or not had to be cast out of the Church. But whereas the casting out in the case of the penitent offender was a solemn act of discipline, forming in fact the first stage in the procedure of reconciliation, the casting out of the impenitent was an expulsion which left the person outside the Church, finally disowned and cut off unless he should still find grace to repent.

Only one reconciliation was contemplated. A second casting out was final. Only one reconciliation.

"For that one, when he goes out for the second time from the Church is justly cut off, and the Church is the more beautified, for there is peace in it."

This remarkable provision of the early Church in East and West alike that though Penance might be admitted once, it might never be admitted again, appears to have arisen in the first place from the instructions in the *Shepherd* of Hermas. In the Syrian churches, if the teaching of S. Chrysostom may be taken as a guide, the restriction will be found to disappear in little more than half a century from this time. In the West, it was more persistent, and will be found still rigorously imposed from Rome in A.D. 385 by Pope Siricius, asserted at Milan by S. Ambrose, and in Africa by S. Augustine; while in Spain it is even maintained as late as the Third Council of Toledo, which was held in A.D. 589.

<sup>1</sup> C. 10.

Analogy of penitents and catechumens.

It has been indicated above that the grades of penance differentiated by S. Gregory the Wonderworker were but an application or development of the system already in force for catechumens. The writer of the *Didascalia* draws out the analogy between penitents and catechumens at some length.

The offender, having first been cast out of the Church and accounted as a heathen and a publican may on repentance be received like the heathen to hear the Word. But just as the heathen till they have been baptized and confirmed<sup>1</sup> are not admitted to take part with the faithful, so with the penitents

“we do not communicate . . . until they show the fruits of repentance. For they can certainly come in if they wish to hear the Word, that they may not perish utterly, but in (the) *Prayer* they take no part.”<sup>2</sup>

They share the *missa catechumenorum*.

The Prayer here mentioned should be understood of the Eucharistic Prayer.<sup>3</sup> In the *missa catechumenorum* to which the penitents are admitted they, like the catechumens, will hear the bishop's discourse. The faithful are not now to avoid them, but rather to seek them and encourage them.

The faithful not to avoid but to encourage the penitents.

“Therefore have intercourse with those who have been reproved for their sins, and are in a bad state, and attach them to you and take care of their [interests] and talk ye with them and console them, keep hold of them and cause them to be converted.”<sup>4</sup>

In due course, the penance accomplished, and the fruits of repentance shown, the faithful were to

“receive him in (the) *Prayer* as [ye do] the heathen. As therefore thou baptizest a heathen and thereafter receivest him, so on that man also lay the hand, every one praying for him; thereafter bring him in and let him partake with the Church. Let that laying on of the hand be to him instead of Baptism. . . .”<sup>4</sup>

The laying on of hands analogous to Baptism.

The laying on of hands in the case of the penitent is held to be closely analogous to Baptism in the case of the catechumen, especially because in either ordinance there was a communication of the Holy Ghost.<sup>5</sup> It appears to be in the mind of the writer

<sup>1</sup> C. 10, “until they receive the seal and are confirmed” (Gibson). The *seal*, so often used in early days of confirmation, seems here to have reference to baptism. Achelis and Flemming translate: *bis sie den Siegel empfangen haben und vollkommen sind*.

<sup>2</sup> C. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Later in the *Didascalia* the faithful are warned off from fellowship with those outside whether in offerings or in prayers. Here Achelis and Flemming are no doubt right in translating “the Prayer”: *Am Gebet jedoch sollen sie nicht teilnehmen*, and again *in die Gemeinde zum Gebet aufgenommen zu werden*.

<sup>4</sup> C. 10.

<sup>5</sup> The translation of Achelis and Flemming is here followed: *denn entweder durch Handauflegung oder durch die Taufe empfangen sie die Mitteilung des heiligen Geistes* (c. 10).



that as by the communication of the Holy Ghost in Baptism there is a "death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness," so in absolution a precisely parallel communication of the Holy Ghost was to be understood, whereby once more the person would be taken out of the state of sin and death, and replaced in a state of grace.

The analogy of the penitent with the catechumen is thus very clearly apprehended by the writer of the *Didascalia*. But the system to which that analogy was giving rise in Pontus is not in Syria so highly elaborated. Besides the status of those who are for the time cast out, and the status of those who are admitted to full communion, there is only mention of one other status, that of the catechumen and of the penitent, who were admitted to the earlier portion of the Liturgy, but who were not allowed to remain for the Eucharistic Prayer. There is no distinction of *Hearers* and *Fallers* and no mention of any grade of *Bystanders*. In the following century for which at Antioch the writings of S. Chrysostom are the leading evidence it will be found that the graded system of penance, then so highly developed in the Asian provinces, was not in force at Antioch. Nor does it appear that it prevailed in Syria anywhere at any time.

The graded system not used in Syria.

There is in the *Didascalia* an interesting section on the bishop's court or tribunal for the settlement of disputes among the faithful. The bishop was to hold it on the Monday with the assistance of the elders and deacons. There would thus be opportunity until the Saturday for the settlement of points of difference between disputants before the next assembly of the church on the Sunday, when the persons would presumably make their communions. In giving judgment the bishop was to make it his aim so to judge that he might "have the Christ as Associate, Counsellor, Assessor, and Overseer of the Court."<sup>1</sup> He might have occasion to cast out one of the persons, and he was to do this with a due sense of his responsibility.

The bishop's court.

His responsibility.

"Investigate carefully, like people who decree judgment concerning eternal life, or for a harsh and bitter death; and if some one be reprov'd and go out of the Church, he is cast out from life, and from everlasting glory, . . . he is rejected by men and found guilty before GOD. . . . But if there be a man who is innocent, and is condemned by judges from respect of persons, it will not hurt him before GOD, but will rather advantage him the more on account of the short time that he hath been unjustly judged by men."<sup>1</sup>

This is worthy of attention. It has been seen how emphatically the writer of the *Didascalia* exhorts the bishop to remember that he has a Divine authority in binding and loosing. But he is no

<sup>1</sup> C. 11.

less clear that where the bishop's action casts out the innocent it will find no support at the Divine hands. There is a reality of Divine commission : but no less reality of Divine revision.

Those cast out not to share in prayers or offerings.

The last feature of the *Didascalia* which will here call for notice is the strict prohibition to the faithful to have any part with those cast out of the Church either in prayers or in offerings. The reference is not to the penitents who are fulfilling their course of penance, but to those definitely outside. To join in prayer with any such is to hinder their repentance, and so to destroy their souls. Nor may the offerings of such persons be received even for the poor.

“GOD has said to you not to take from the wicked and help the churches; it were profitable for you to be tortured by hunger rather than to take from the wicked.”

If by inadvertence or accident the offerings of the wicked have been received they are not to be used in buying food, as for a widow in need, but rather on wood for fire. The distinction is curious. Modern casuists are familiar enough with the distinction which would bar the acceptance of doubtful offerings by the Church, but permit them to the poor. But to forbid the use of such offerings by the poor for food, while permitting it on occasion for fuel, is a distinction which will not readily find later parallels.

The attitude of the Church towards the offerings of the unreconciled is thus one of almost entire repudiation.

The Apostolical Constitutions. Books I-VI founded on the *Didascalia*.

The foregoing study of the *Didascalia Apostolorum* calls for some reference to the better known *Apostolical Constitutions*. It is now generally agreed that the first six books of the *Constitutions* are based on the *Didascalia*, the first part of the seventh book on the *Didache*, and the eighth book on the writings of Hippolytus. The compiler was a compiler; but he “worked up” his material to a considerable extent. The place of origin appears to have been Syria. The date assigned by Harnack is A.D. 340-380; by Funk, A.D. 400.

Examples of this relationship.

A few passages of the *Apostolical Constitutions* have been given above, from which the relation to the *Didascalia* will be sufficiently illustrated. So far as the *Constitutions* have any separate testimony for their own time it is hard to assign it. It cannot be certainly argued that the conditions and practice of the *Didascalia* were still in force in Syria unaltered a hundred or a hundred and fifty years later, because the compiler leaves the passages substantially unaltered.

It will be seen that the passages given above repeat the *Didascalia* on many important points. The bishop is in authority over all classes of men to judge those who have sinned. To bishops it



has been given to bind and loose.<sup>1</sup> The bishop is to judge with authority as in the person of God, but to accept the penitent.<sup>2</sup> The bishop is first to condemn the offender, then to encourage his penitence, and after due penalty, to reconcile him.<sup>3</sup> The bishop is not to be hindered in mercy by the rigorists.<sup>4</sup> Nor should the bishop be subject to such persons, who should be subject to him.<sup>4</sup> The bishop is neither to overlook sins nor to reject the penitent.<sup>5</sup> The procedure in penance is recited. The penitent is to be cast out of the church building; the faithful, leaving him outside, return to supplicate for him; the bishop will then order him to be brought in, and will examine whether he repents and is worthy to be received into the Church, appointing him days of fasting in accordance with the offence, two or three or five or seven weeks, and so dismiss him, giving him suitable counsel.<sup>6</sup> Having separated him for a definite time proportioned to the offence, he will then receive the penitent.<sup>6</sup> The formal reconciliation is to be by the laying on of the bishop's hands, the whole Church supplicating for the penitent who is called the Mourner (προσκλαύσαντα).<sup>7</sup> A bishop who will not forgive may not expect himself to be forgiven.<sup>8</sup> Idolaters may be reconciled if truly penitent. Not so the calculating sinner who tempts God by presuming that He will not punish the guilty.<sup>9</sup> The imposition of the bishop's hand in Absolution is like to Baptism in that the Holy Spirit is given in both.<sup>10</sup> Christians are not to take their differences before an "ethnic" tribunal. The bishop is to hold his court on the second day after the Sabbath that there may be the longer term in which to settle any discontent before the Sunday come. The deacons and presbyters are to be in attendance. The contending parties are to be present in court. An endeavour is to be made to settle the difference without the episcopal judgment, "in order that a judgment may not be pronounced upon earth against the offender, because in his tribunal (the bishop) has the Christ of God as his Supporter (σύμψηφον, Co-voter) and Inspirer (συνίστορα, one jointly conscious) of the judgment."<sup>11</sup> The indication of the *Didascalia* that in giving judgment the bishop will be exercising his prerogative of binding and loosing is thus in the *Constitutions* iterated with increasing clearness.

In all this the *Constitutions* only repeat the *Didascalia* with but slight modifications. The chief part of the material must accordingly not be accounted later than the second half of the third century.

This material is of the third century.

In the present chapter attention has been given to two widely removed spheres of Church life on the continent of Asia at points of time almost identical, which may both be assigned to the period A.D. 252-270. The evidence of Pontus and of Syria is

The evidence of Pontus and of Syria compared.

<sup>1</sup> *Const. Apost.*, ii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> ii. 12.

<sup>3</sup> ii. 13.

<sup>4</sup> ii. 14.

<sup>5</sup> ii. 15.

<sup>6</sup> ii. 16.

<sup>7</sup> ii. 18.

<sup>8</sup> ii. 21.

<sup>9</sup> ii. 23.

<sup>10</sup> ii. 41.

<sup>11</sup> ii. 47.

before us for comparison. The parallels and the contrasts are alike interesting.

Both Pontus and the country districts of Syria are provincial. Pontus is a far-away missionary diocese: the church of the *Didascalia*, if at no great distance from the mother church of Antioch, has but few echoes of her life or spirit. Alike in Pontus and in the church of the *Didascalia* the bishop is the supreme officer, in authority over all persons and causes. In both churches alike a person who has offended may either be dealt with on his own admission or on a public charge. In Pontus S. Gregory is prepared to consider this distinction in assigning the penance. Those who have despoiled the houses of their brethren in times of barbarian incursion are, if they confess, to take their place at once among the *Fallers*, but if the charge is brought against them by others they are to be excluded even from the *Hearing*.<sup>1</sup> In the church of the *Didascalia*, the bishop "gives hope to those who have sinned when they repent," which seems to indicate the voluntary penitent.<sup>2</sup> When a charge is brought against any it is to be established at the mouth of two or three witnesses.<sup>3</sup> There is in Syria no mention of specific distinction in penance between the penitent who confesses and the sinner who is convicted on the accusation of others. In each church there is a court of some formality. In Pontus S. Gregory sends Euphrosynus to show to his brother bishop in accordance with the system in force at Neo-Cæsarea against whom to admit accusations, and whom it is necessary to exclude from the *Prayers*. In Syria the bishop's court is to sit on a Monday, the presbyters and deacons are to be in attendance, the parties are to be formally heard, and adequate evidence required. The judgment of the court when given is, however, to be regarded as something more than a conscientious sentence given in accordance with a man's best ability. It is an exercise of the bishop's prerogative of binding and loosing. In Pontus, in the case of persons guilty of shedding the blood of their brethren, the bishop at once repels such persons from the *Hearing*, or in other words thrusts them out of the church: and for any future relaxation of this binding he will wait "till some common counsel shall approve itself to the saints assembled, and before them to the Holy Ghost." In Syria the bishop is reminded of his responsibility in decreeing judgment "concerning eternal life, or for a harsh and bitter death."

In neither church is there any indication of the long terms of penance which would shortly become the rule in the Asian provinces. The canonical epistle of S. Gregory assigns no terms of penance: and the *Didascalia* indicates two or three or five or seven weeks of fasting as meeting the most serious cases. It is worthy of remark that these indications of the suitable length of penance remain unaltered in the *Apostolical Constitutions*, perhaps

<sup>1</sup> S. Greg. Thau., *Ep. Can.*, c. viii.

<sup>2</sup> *Didascalia*, c. 6.

<sup>3</sup> C. 10.



a century later, when penances of many years' duration were the rule in the Asian provinces. It cannot indeed be certainly concluded that because the *Constitutions* retain this provision the practice of the Syrian churches of the fourth century corresponded with it.

The gradations of penance are more elaborate in Pontus than in Syria. The five grades, afterwards to become familiar in the Asian churches, are already clearly distinguished in S. Gregory's epistle. In the church of the *Didascalia* only three distinctions are traceable: (1) the Excluded, (2) the Penitents, (3) the Faithful.

In each church the analogy of penitent and catechumen is to be noted. In Pontus the system in force for catechumens, which appears at least in some churches to have involved the distinction of *Fallers* and *Hearers*, was apparently the starting-point of the penitential gradation. Those as yet outside, soon to be known as *Mourners*, might be counted as another grade. Those fully restored to their place among the *Faithful*, were another. The grade of *Bystanders*, who remained throughout the Liturgy, but did not communicate, was probably created for the penitent. But the basis of the fabric seems certainly to have been the existing provision for the catechumens. In Syria while the grading is not so elaborate, the philosophical analogy of penitent and catechumen is insisted on at some length. Both alike are admitted to hear the Word, but both alike have to show fruits of repentance, before they can be admitted to the *Prayer*.<sup>1</sup>

Some difference is discernible in the procedure both of penance and of reconciliation. In Pontus in certain cases the penitent is solemnly excluded from the *Hearing*. But there is no evidence of a formal expulsion in other cases. The penitent is indeed in the first instance dealt with as one outside. But the bishop's judgment may perhaps admit him without further ado among the *Fallers*. So in the following century S. Basil the Great, to shield adulteresses from public knowledge, admits them after their confession (a necessarily private confession) to begin their penance among the *Bystanders*. In the church of the *Didascalia* much stress is laid on a formal and ceremonial expulsion from the church building before there can be any consideration of penance and forgiveness; and this not only in the gravest cases but in all. Again in the church of the *Didascalia* there is a developed procedure of reconciliation, which appears to have included (1) the weeping of the penitent, (2) the supplication of the faithful, (3) the laying-on of hands by the bishop, and (4) the re-instatement of the penitent among the faithful. No formal procedure of reconciliation can be gathered from the canonical epistle of S. Gregory.

<sup>1</sup> *Didascalia*, c. 10.

## VI. THE NICENE PERIOD

(A.D. 300 TO A.D. 350)

### TEXT OF AUTHORITIES

- [Marcellus, A.D. 308–309, notices of Pope]  
Damasine Epitaph and Liber Pontificalis.  
[Eusebius, A.D. 309, notice of Pope]  
Damasine Epitaph.  
Council of Illiberris (c. A.D. 305).  
S. Peter of Alexandria (abp. A.D. 300–311).  
Council of Arles (A.D. 314).  
Council of Ancyra (A.D. 314).  
Council of Neo-Cæsarea (c. A.D. 320).  
Council of Nicæa (A.D. 325).

[*Marcellus experienced hostility from the lapsed whom he repelled.*]

Pope Marcellus (A.D. 309).

Damasine Epitaph.

[De Rossi, *La Roma Sotterranea Cristiana*, II. 204.]

Veridicus rector, lapsos quia crimina flere  
prædixit, miseris fuit omnibus hostis amarus :  
hinc furor, hinc odium sequitur, discordia, lites,  
seditio, cædes : solvuntur fœdera pacis.  
Crimen ob alterius Christum qui in pace negavit  
finibus expulsus patriæ est feritate tyranni.  
Hæc breviter Damasus voluit comperta referre  
Marcelli ut populus meritum cognoscere posset.

[*Rioting of Roman Christians over the question of the lapsed,*  
A.D. 309.]

Pope Eusebius (A.D. 309).

Damasine Epitaph<sup>1</sup> (“*dal celebre codice palatino-vaticano.*”  
Gruter, 1171, 17).

[De Rossi, *La Roma Sotterranea Cristiana*, II. 195.]

Heraclius vetuit lapsos peccata dolere  
Eusebius miseros docuit sua crimina flere

<sup>1</sup> The two actual inscriptions discovered by De Rossi are reproduced in lithograph in Tavv. III and IV at the end of the second volume of *La Roma Sotterranea*. Of the original inscription (Tav. III) only a few fragments remain. The inscriptions have the preface + *Damasus episcopus fecit*, and close with the dedication *Eusebio episcopo et martyri*. De Rossi restores *extemplo* for *exemplo* in line five, and *Domino* for *omnino* in line seven (in Tav. IV it is *omino*).



**Pope Eusebius—Damascine Epitaph.**

Scinditur in partes populus gliscente furore  
 Seditio cædes bellum discordia lites  
 Exemplo pariter pulsi feritate tyranni  
 Integra cum rector servaret fœdera pacis  
 Pertulit exilium omnino sub iudice lætus  
 Litore Trinacrio mundum vitamque reliquit.

[*Marcellus (A.D. 308–309) institutes 25 titles in Rome for Baptism and Penance.*]

**Liber Pontificalis, I. 164.**

[*Ed. Duchesne, Paris, 1886.*]

Marcellus, natione Romanus, ex patre Benedicto, de regione Via Lata, sedit ann. V., m. VII., a. XXI. Fuit autem temporibus Maxenti, a consulatu Maxentio IIII. et Maximo usque post consulatum. Hic fecit cymiterium Novellæ, via Salaria, et XXV. titulos in urbe Roma constituit, quasi diocesis, propter baptismum et pœnitentiam multorum qui convertebantur ex paganis et propter sepulturas martyrum. . . .

[*Adult fideles who have worshipped in the temples not to be communicated at death.*]

**Concilium Eliberitanum (Illiberris, c. A.D. 305).**

Cap. 1.

[*Mansi, II. 6.*]

Placuit inter eos, qui post fidem baptismi salutaris, adulta ætate ad templum idololatraturus accesserit, et fecerit, quod est crimen principale (quia est summum scelus) placuit nec in fine eum communionem accipere.

[*Flamines who have sacrificed not to be communicated at death.*]

Cap. 2.

Flamines, qui post fidem lavacri et regenerationis sacrificaverunt; eo quod geminaverint scelera, accedente homicidio; vel triplicaverint facinus, cohærente mœchia, placuit eos nec in fine accipere communionem.

[*Flamines who have not sacrificed may after penance be communicated at death. Adulterers after penance not to be communicated at death.*]

Cap. 3.

[*Mansi, II. 6.*]

Item flamines, qui non immolaverint, sed munus tantum dederint; eo quod se a funestis abstinerint sacrificiis, placuit, in fine eis præstari communionem; acta tamen legitima pœnitentia. Item ipsi, si post pœnitentiam fuerint mœchati, placuit, ulterius his non esse dandam communionem, ne lusisse de dominica communione videantur.

**Concilium Eliberitanum.**

[*If a maidservant die from her mistress's beating, the mistress after penance to be admissible to communion.*]

Cap. 5.

[Mansi, II. 6.]

Si qua domina furore zeli accensa flagris verberaverit ancillam suam, ita ut in tertium diem animam cum cruciatu effundat; eo quod incertum sit voluntate, an casu, occiderit; si voluntate, post septem annos, si casu, post quinquennii tempora, acta legitima pœnitentia, ad communionem placuit admitti. Quod si infra tempora constituta fuerit infirmata, accipiat communionem.

[*Homicide by magic art involves idolatry. Communion not to be accorded at death.*]

Cap. 6.

[Mansi, II. 6.]

Si quis vero maleficio interficiat alterum; eo quod sine idololatRIA perficere scelus non potuit nec in fine impertiendam esse illi communionem.

[*An adulterer after one penance admitted not to be communicated at death.*]

Cap. 7.

[Mansi, II. 7.]

Si quis forte fidelis post lapsum mœchiæ, post tempora constituta, accepta, pœnitentia denuo fuerit fornicatus, placuit, nec in fine habere eum communionem.

[*Adulteresses not to be communicated at death.*]

Cap. 8

[Mansi, II. 7.]

Item fœminæ, quæ, nulla precedente causa, reliquerint viros suos, et se copulaverint alteris, nec in fine accipiant communionem.

[*A woman fidelis, who has become united to a catechumen, who has deserted his innocent wife, may not be communicated at death.*]

Cap. 10.

[Mansi, II. 7.]

Si ea, quam catechumenus reliquit, duxerit maritum, potest ad fontem lavacri admitti. Hoc et circa fœminas catechumenas erit observandum. Quod si fuerit fidelis, quæ ducitur, ab eo qui uxorem inculpatam reliquit, et cum scierit illum habere uxorem, quam sine causa reliquit, huic nec in finem dandam esse communionem.<sup>1</sup>

[*Posterior hujus canonis pars sic legitur in codice quodam membranaceo.*]

Quod si ducitur ab eo qui inculpatam reliquit uxorem, et eum scierit habere uxorem, quam sine causa reliquit; placuit, nec in fine hujus communionem.

<sup>1</sup> *hujusmodi in fine dare communionem* is given in the margin of Mansi as the reading of one MS.



**Concilium Eliberitanum.**

*[A mother, or other fidelis, who has acted as a procuress, not to be communicated at death.]*

Cap. 12.

[Mansi, II. 7.]

Mater, vel parens, vel quælibet fidelis, si lenocinium exercuerit, eo quod alienum vendiderit corpus, vel potius suum, placuit eas nec in fine accipere communionem.

*[Dedicated virgins, who have forfeited their virginity, and have not admitted offence, not to be communicated at death.]*

Cap. 13.

[Mansi, II. 8.]

Virgines, quæ se Deo dicaverint, si pactum perdiderint virginitatis, atque eidem libidini servierint; non intelligentes quod amiserint, placuit nec in fine eis dandam esse communionem. Quod si semel persuasæ, aut infirmi corporis lapsu vitiatæ, omni tempore vitæ suæ hujusmodi fœminæ egerint pœnitentiam, ut abstineant se a coitu, eo quod lapsæ potius videantur, placuit, eas in fine communionem accipere debere.

*[Persons who have married their daughters to the priests of idols not to be communicated at death.]*

Cap. 17.

[Mansi, II. 8.]

Si qui forte sacerdotibus idolorum filias suas junxerint, placuit, nec in fine eis dandam esse communionem.

*[Bishops, priests, and deacons detected in adultery not to be communicated at death.]*

Cap. 19.

[Mansi, II. 9.]

Episcopi, presbyteri, et diacones, si in ministerio positi, detecti fuerint, quod sint mœchati, placuit, et propter scandalum, et propter profanum crimen, nec in fine eos communionem accipere debere.

*[Confessors' letters to be withdrawn, and letters of communion substituted.]*

Cap. 25.

[Mansi, II. 10.]

Omnis qui attulerit literas confessionis sublato nomine confessoris (eo quod omnes sub hac nominis gloria passim concutiant simplices) communicatoriæ ei dandæ sunt literæ.

*[Persons guilty of impurity in their adolescence not to be ordained sub-deacons.]*

Cap. 30.

[Mansi, II. 10.]

Subdiaconos eos ordinari non debere, qui in adolescentia sua fuerint mœchati; eo quod postmodum, per subreptionem, ad altiorem gradum promoveantur: vel si qui sunt in præteritum ordinati, amoveantur.

**Concilium Eliberitanum.**

[*Baptized young men who have been impure in their adolescence may after they have married be admitted to communion, due penance being done.*]

Cap. 31.

[Mansi, II. 10.]

Adolescentes qui post fidem lavacri salutaris fuerint mœchati, cum duxerint uxores, acta legitima pœnitentia, placuit ad communionem admitti.

[*Backsliding catechumens not to be refused Baptism.*]

Cap. 45.

[Mansi, II. 13.]

Qui aliquando fuerit catechumenus, et per infinita tempora nunquam ad ecclesiam accesserit, si eum de clero quisque cognoverit esse Christianum, aut testes aliqui extiterint fideles, placuit ei baptismum non negari, eo quod in veterem hominem deliquisse videatur.

[*To a fidelis who has deserted the Church but not worshipped idols, communion may be accorded after ten years.*]

Cap. 46.

[Mansi, II. 13.]

Si quis fidelis apostata, per infinita tempora, ad ecclesiam non accesserit; si tamen aliquando fuerit reversus, nec fuerit idololatra, post decem annos placuit communionem accipere.

[*A fidelis who has frequently committed adultery may be communicated on his death-bed if he undertake to amend. If after recovery he repeat the offence reconciliation not open.*]

Cap. 47.

[Mansi, II. 13.]

Si quis fidelis habens uxorem, non semel, sed sæpe fuerit mœchatus, in fine mortis est conveniendus. Quod si se promiserit cessaturum, detur ei communio. Si resuscitatus rursus fuerit mœchatus, placuit ulterius non ludere eum de communione pacis.

[*Communion to be restored by the bishop who has withheld it.*]

Cap. 53.

[Mansi, II. 14.]

Placuit cunctis, ut ab eo episcopo quis accipiat communionem, a quo abstentus in crimine aliquo fuerit. Quod si alius episcopus præsumpserit eum admitti, illo adhuc minime faciente, vel consentiente, a quo fuerat communione privatus, sciat se hujusmodi causas inter fratres cum status sui periculo præstaturum.

[*Those who lapsed in frailty under torment to fast with prayer forty days.*]

**S. Peter of Alexandria** (archbishop A.D. 300–311).

*Canonical Epistle.*

[Migne, *P. G.*, XVIII. 468; Routh, *Reliquiæ Sacræ*, IV. 23.]

*Canon I.*

Ἐπεὶ τοίνυν τέταρτον ἤδη Πάσχα ἐπικατείληφε τὸν διωγμὸν, αὐτάρκως



## S. Peter of Alexandria

ἔχει τοῖς μὲν προσενεχθεῖσι, καὶ φυλακεσθεῖσι, βασάνους τε ἀνυποίστους ὑπομεμενηκόσι, καὶ ἀφορήτους μάστιγας, καὶ πολλὰς ἐτέρας ἀνάγκας δεινὰς, ὕστερον δὲ προδεδομένοις ὑπὸ τῆς ἀσθενείας τῆς σαρκὸς, εἰ καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἀρχῆς παρεδέχθησαν διὰ τὴν παρακολουθήσασαν μεγίστην πτώσιν, ὅμως διὰ τὸ πολλὰ αὐτοὺς ἠθληκέναι καὶ ἐπὶ πολὺ ἀντιμαχέσασθαι (οὐ γὰρ κατὰ προαίρεσιν ἐν τούτῳ ἐληλύθασιν, ἀλλὰ καταπροδοθέντες ὑπὸ τῆς ἀσθενείας τῆς σαρκὸς), ἐπειδὴ καὶ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐνδείκνυνται ἐν τοῖς σώμασιν ἑαυτῶν, καὶ ἤδη τινὲς τρίτον ἔτος ἔχουσι καταπενθοῦντες· προσεπιτιμηθῆναι αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς προσελεύσεως καθ' ὑπόμνησιν ἄλλας τεσσαράκοντα ἡμέρας, ἃς καίπερ νηστεύσας ὁ Κύριος καὶ Σωτὴρ ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς, μετὰ τὸ βαπτισθῆναι, ἐπειράσθη ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου· εἰς ἃς καὶ αὐτοὶ κατὰ τὸ περισσὸν διαγυμνασθέντες, εὐτονώτερόν τε νήψαντες, γρηγορήσουσιν εἰς προσευχὰς τοῦ λοιποῦ. . . .

[Those who lapsed as prisoners to do penance for a year.]

## Canon II.

[Migne, P. G., XVIII. 469.]

Τοῖς δὲ μετὰ τὸ φυλακισθῆναι μόνον, καὶ ὑπομεμνηκέναι τὰς ἐν τῷ δεσμωτηρίῳ ὡς ἂν ἐν πολιορκίᾳ, θλίψεις τε καὶ δυσωδίας· ὕστερον δὲ χωρὶς πολέμου βασάνων γενομένοις αἰχμαλώτοις, κατὰ πολλὴν πτωχείαν δυνάμειος καὶ κατὰ τινα τυφλότητα τεθραυσμένοις· ἐπαρκέσει ἐνιαυτὸς πρὸς τῷ ἐτέρῳ χρόνῳ.

[Those who lapsed in mere cowardice to be in penance for the time of the barren fig-tree (Balsamon 3 years, Zonaras 4).]

## Canon III.

[Migne, P. G., XVIII. 472.]

Τοῖς δὲ μηδ' ὅλως μηδέν τι τοιοῦτο πεπονθόσι μηδὲ ἐνδειξαμένοις καρπὸν πίστεως, ἀλλ' αὐτομολήσασιν πρὸς τὴν κακίαν, προδεδομένοις ὑπὸ δειλίας καὶ φόβου· νῦν δὲ εἰς μετάνοιαν ἐρχομένοις· ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι καὶ ἀρμόζον τὴν τῆς ἀκάρπου συκῆς παραβολὴν παραθέσθαι . . . ἣν πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν λαβόντες, ἐνδειξάμενοί τε καρπὸν ἄξιον τῆς μετανοίας ἐν τῷ διαστήματι τοῦ τοσούτου χρόνου μᾶλλον ὠφελήσονται.

[For those who avoided sacrifice by dissimulation six months' penance.]

## Canon V.

[Migne, P. G., XVIII. 473.]

Τοῖς δὲ καθυποκρικαμένοις, κατὰ τὸν ἐπιληπτευσάμενον Δαβὶδ ἵνα μὴ ἀποθάνῃ, οὐκ ὄντα ἐπὶ λήπτον· καὶ μὴ γυμνῶς ἀπογραψάμενοις τὰ πρὸς ἄρνησιν, ἀλλὰ διαπαίξασιν κατὰ πολλὴν στενοχωρίαν (ὡς ἂν παιδία βουλευτικά ἔμφρονα ἐν παιδίῳις ἄφροσι) τὰς τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἐπιβουλὰς, ἥτοι ὡς διελθόντες βωμοὺς, ἥτοι ὡς χειρογραφῆσαντες, ἥτοι ὡς ἀνθ' ἑαυτῶν βαλόντες ἐθνικούς· εἰ καὶ τισιν αὐτῶν συνεχώρησάν τινες τῶν ὁμολογησάντων, ὡς ἤκουσα, ἐπεὶ μάλιστα κατὰ πολλὴν εὐλάβειαν ἐξέφυγον αὐτόχειρες γενέσθαι τοῦ πυρὸς, καὶ τῆς ἀναθυμιάσεως τῶν ἀκαθάρτων δαιμόνων· ἐπεὶ τοίνυν ἔλαθεν αὐτοὺς ἀνοία τοῦτο πράξαντας· ὅμως ἐξάμηνος αὐτοῖς ἐπιτεθήσεται τῆς ἐν μετανοίᾳ ἐπιστροφῆς.

**S. Peter of Alexandria.**

[*For Christian slaves sent to sacrifice by Christian masters a year's penance.*]

Canon VI.

[Migne, P. G., XVIII. 477.]

Τοῖς δὲ δούλους Χριστιανούς ἀνθ' ἑαυτῶν ὑποβεβληκόσιν, οἱ μὲν δοῦλοι ὡς ἂν ὑποχείριοι ὄντες, καὶ τρόπον τινὰ καὶ αὐτοὶ φυλακισθέντες ἰπὸ τῶν δεσποτῶν, καταπειληθέντες τε ὑπ' αὐτῶν, καὶ διὰ τὸν φόβον αὐτῶν εἰς τοῦτο ἐληλυθότες καὶ ὀλισθήσαντες· ἐν ἐνιαυτῷ τὰ τῆς μετανοίας ἔργα δεῖξωσι, μανθάνοντες τοῦ λοιποῦ, ὡς δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ ποιεῖν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ φοβεῖσθαι αὐτόν· ἀκούοντες μάλιστα Ὅτι ἕκαστος ἐάν τι ποιήσῃ ἀγαθόν, τοῦτο κομίσεται παρὰ Κυρίου, εἴτε δοῦλος εἴτε ἐλεύθερος.

[*For their masters penance for three years.*]

Canon VII.

[Migne, P. G., XVIII. 480.]

οἱ δὲ ἐλεύθεροι ἐν τρισὶν ἔτεσιν ἐξετασθήσονται ἐν μετανοίᾳ, καὶ ὡς ὑποκρινάμενοι, καὶ ὡς καταναγκάσαντες τοὺς ὁμοδούλους θῦσαι, ἅτε δὴ παρακούσαντες τοῦ ἀποστόλου τὰ αὐτὰ θέλοντος ποιεῖν τοὺς δεσπότας τοῖς δούλοις, ἀνιέντας τὴν ἀπειλήν.

[*With those who after lapse confessed again it is right to hold communion.*]

Canon VIII.

[Migne, P. G., XVIII. 480.]

Τοῖς δὲ παραδεδομένοις καὶ ἐκπεπτωκόσι, τοῖς τε αὐτοῖς προσεληλυθόσιν εἰς τὸν ἀγῶνα ὁμολογοῦσιν εἶναι Χριστιανοῖς, ἐμβεβλημένοις τε ἐν τῇ φυλακῇ μετὰ βασάνων· εὐλογόν ἐστιν ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει καρδίας συνεπισχύειν καὶ κοινωνεῖν ἐν πάσιν, ἔν τε ταῖς προσευχαῖς καὶ τῇ μεταλήψει τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ αἵματος, καὶ τῇ παρακλήσει τοῦ λόγου· ἵνα εὐτονώτερον ἀγωνισάμενοι καταξιωθῶσι καὶ αὐτοὶ τοῦ βραβείου τῆς ἁνῶ κλήσεως. Καὶ γὰρ ἐπτάκις, φησὶ, πεσεῖται ὁ δίκαιος καὶ ἀναστήσεται. ὅπερ εἰ καὶ πάντες οἱ ἐκπεπτωκότες πεποιήκεσαν, τελειοτάτην καὶ ὀλοκάρδιον μετανοίαν ἐνεδείξαντο.

[*But clergy who after lapse have confessed again are not to minister.*]

Canon X.

[Migne, P. G., XVIII. 488.]

Ὅθεν οὐκ ἔστιν εὐλογον οὐδὲ τοὺς ἀπὸ κλήρου αὐτομολήσαντας ἐκπεπτωκώτας τε καὶ ἀναπαλαίσαντας, ἔτι ἐν τῇ λειτουργίᾳ εἶναι, ἅτε δὴ καταλείψαντας τὸ ποιμνιον Κυρίου καὶ μωμησαμένους ἑαυτούς· ὅπερ οὐδεὶς τῶν ἀποστόλων πεποίηκε . . . ἀρκεῖ γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἡ κοινωνία. . . .

[*Persons forced to acts of sacrifice against their will are to be accounted confessors.*]

Canon XIV.

[Migne, P. G., XVIII. 505.]

Εἰ δέ τινες βίαν πολλὴν καὶ ἀνάγκην πεπόνθασι χάμον λαβόντες ἐν τῷ στόματι καὶ δεσμούς, καὶ ἐπιμείναντες καρτερῶς τῇ διαθέσει τῆς πίστεως, ὡς καὶ τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῶν καὶ ναι προσαγομένους ἀκοντὶ τῷ ἀνιέρῳ θύματι, ὡς περὸν



**S. Peter of Alexandria.**

ἐγγραφάν μοι οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς φυλακῆς τρισμακάριοι μάρτυρες περὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ Λιβύῃ, καὶ ἕτεροι δὲ συλλειτουργοί· οἱ τοιοῦτοι συμμαρτυροῦντων αὐτοῖς μάλιστα καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀδελφῶν, δύνανται εἶναι ἐν τῇ λειτουργίᾳ, ταχθέντες ἐν τοῖς ὁμολογηταῖς, ὥς καὶ οἱ κατανεκρωθέντες ἐν ταῖς πολλαῖς βασάνοις, καὶ μηκέτι ἐξισχύσαντες λαλῆσαι ἢ φθέγξασθαι ἢ κινηθῆναι εἰς τὸ ἀντιστῆναι τοῖς εἰς μάτην βιαζομένοις· οὐδὲ γὰρ συγκατέθεντο τῇ βδελυρίᾳ αὐτῶν, ὥσπεροῦν παρὰ συλλειτουργῶν πάλιν ἤκουσα. Ταχθήσεται δὲ ἐν τοῖς ὁμολογηταῖς καὶ πᾶς ὁστισοῦν κατὰ Τιμόθεον πολιτεύεται.

[*Confessors' letters to be exchanged for letters of communion.*]

**Concilium Arelatense (A.D. 314).**

**Can. 9.**

[Mansi, II. 472.]

De his, qui confessorum literas afferunt, placuit, ut sublatis eis literis accipiant communicatorias.

[*Alleged traditors only to be degraded from the clergy on the evidence of public instruments.*]

**Can. 13.**

[Mansi, II. 472.]

De his qui scripturas sanctas tradidisse dicuntur, vel vasa dominica, vel nomina fratrum suorum, placuit nobis, ut quicumque eorum ex actis publicis fuerit detectus, non verbis nudis, ab ordine cleri amoveatur. Nam si iidem aliquos ordinasse fuerint deprehensi, et de his quos ordinaverint ratio subsistit, non illis obsit ordinatio. Et quoniam multi sunt qui contra ecclesiasticam regulam pugnare videntur, et per testes redemptos putant se ad accusationem admitti debere, omnino non admittantur, nisi ut supra diximus, actis publicis docuerint.

[*False accusers of their brethren not to be restored to communion in this life.*]

**Can. 14.**

[Mansi, II. 473.]

De his qui falso accusant fratres suos, placuit eos usque ad exitum non communicare.

[*Communion only to be accorded in the same place in which it had been withheld.*]

**Can. 16.**

[Mansi, II. 473.]

De his qui pro delicto suo a communione separantur, placuit ut in quibuscumque locis fuerint exclusi, eodem loco communionem consequantur.

[*Apostates only professing penitence on their death-beds are not to be reconciled.*]

**Can. 22.**

[Mansi, II. 473.]

De his qui apostatant, et nunquam se ad Ecclesiam repræsentant nec quidem poenitentiam agere quærunt, et postea infirmitate

**Concilium Arelatense.**

arrepti petunt communionem; placuit eis non dandam communionem nisi revaluerint, et egerint dignos fructus pœnitentiæ.

[*Course of penance prescribed for willing sacrificers.*]

**Concilium Ancyranum (A.D. 314).**

Can. 4.

[Mansi, II. 516.]

Περὶ τῶν πρὸς βίαν θυσάντων, ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦτοις καὶ τῶν δειπνησάντων εἰς τὰ εἶδωλα, ὅσοι μὲν ἀπαγόμενοι καὶ σχήματι φαιδρότέρῳ ἀνῆλθον καὶ ἐσθῆτι ἐχρήσαντο πολυτελεστέρα καὶ μετέσχον τοῦ παρασκευασθέντος δείπνου ἀδιαφόρως, ἔδοξεν ἐνιαυτὸν ἀκροᾶσθαι, ὑποπεσεῖν δὲ τρία ἔτη, εὐχῆς δὲ μόνης κοινωνῆσαι ἔτη δύο, καὶ τότε ἐλθεῖν ἐπὶ τὸ τέλειον.

[*Course of penance for such sacrificers as had showed signs of grief.*]

Can. 5.

[Mansi, II. 516.]

Ὅσοι δὲ ἀνῆλθον μετὰ ἐσθῆτος πενθικῆς καὶ ἀναπесόντες ἔφαγον μεταξύ δι' ὅλης τῆς ἀνακλίσεως δακρύνοντες, εἰ ἐπλήρωσαν τὸν τῆς ὑποπτώσεως τριετῆ χρόνον, χωρὶς προσφορᾶς δεχθήτωσαν· εἰ δὲ μὴ ἔφαγον, δύο ὑποπесόντες ἔτη τῷ τρίτῳ κοινωνησάτωσαν χωρὶς προσφορᾶς, ἵνα τὸ τέλειον τῇ τετραετίᾳ λάβωσι, τοὺς δὲ ἐπισκόπους ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν τὸν τρόπον τῆς ἐπιστροφῆς δοκιμάσαντας φιλανθρωπεύεσθαι ἢ πλείονα προστιθέναι χρόνον· πρὸ πάντων δὲ καὶ ὁ προάγων βίος καὶ ὁ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐξεταζέσθω, καὶ οὕτως ἡ φιλανθρωπία ἐπιμετρεῖσθω.

[*Case of persons who had readily sacrificed, and who had not till now expressed a desire to return.*]

Can. 6.

[Mansi, II. 516.]

Περὶ τῶν ἀπειλῇ μόνον εἰζάντων κολάσεως καὶ ἀφαιρέσεως ὑπαρχόντων ἢ μετοικίας καὶ θυσάντων καὶ μέχρι τοῦ παρόντος καιροῦ μὴ μετανοησάντων μηδὲ ἐπιστρεψάντων, νῦν δὲ παρὰ τὸν καιρὸν τῆς συνόδου προσελθόντων καὶ εἰς διάνοιαν τῆς ἐπιστροφῆς γενομένων, ἔδοξε μέχρι τῆς μεγάλης ἡμέρας εἰς ἀκρόασιν δεχθῆναι, καὶ μετὰ τὴν μεγάλην ἡμέραν ὑποπεσεῖν τρία ἔτη καὶ μετὰ ἄλλα δύο ἔτη κοινωνῆσαι χωρὶς προσφορᾶς, καὶ οὕτως ἐλθεῖν ἐπὶ τὸ τέλειον, ὥστε τὴν πᾶσαν ἑξαετίαν πληρῶσαι· εἰ δὲ τινες πρὸ τῆς συνόδου ταύτης ἐδέχθησαν εἰς μετάνοιαν, ἀπ' ἐκείνου τοῦ χρόνου λελογίσθαι αὐτοῖς τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ἑξαετίας· εἰ μέντοι κίνδυνος καὶ θανάτου προσδοκία ἐκ νόσου ἢ ἄλλης τινὸς προφάσεως συμβαίῃ, τούτους ἐπὶ ὄρῳ δεχθῆναι.

[*Grave carnal sins. Long terms of penance assigned.*]

Can. 16.

[Mansi, II. 519.]

Περὶ τῶν ἀλογευσαμένων ἢ καὶ ἀλογενομένων, ὅσοι πρὶν εἰκοσαετείς γενέσθαι ἡμαρτον, πέντε καὶ δέκα ἔτεσιν ὑποπесόντες κοινωνίας τυγχανέτωσαν τῆς εἰς τὰς προσευχὰς, εἴτα ἐν τῇ κοινωνίᾳ διατελέσαντες ἔτη πέντε, τότε καὶ τῆς προσφορᾶς ἐφαπτέσθωσαν· ἐξεταζέσθω δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ ὁ ἐν τῇ



**Concilium Ancyranum.**

ὑποπτώσει βίος, καὶ οὕτως τυγχανέτωσαν τῆς φιланθρωπίας· εἰ δέ τινες κατακόρως ἐν τοῖς ἁμαρτήμασι γεγónασι, τὴν μακρὰν ἐχέτωσαν ὑπόπτωσιν· ὅσοι δὲ ὑπερβάντες τὴν ἡλικίαν ταύτην καὶ γυναῖκας ἔχοντες περιπεπτώκασιν τῷ ἁμαρτήματι, πέντε καὶ εἴκοσι ἔτη ὑποπεσέτωσαν καὶ κοινωνίας τυγχανέτωσαν τῆς εἰς τὰς προσευχὰς, εἴτα ἐκτελέσαντες πέντε ἔτη ἐν τῇ κοινωνίᾳ τῶν εὐχῶν τυγχανέτωσαν τῆς προσφορᾶς· εἰ δέ τινες καὶ γυναῖκας ἔχοντες καὶ ὑπερβάντες τὸν πεντηκονταετῆ χρόνον ἡμαρτον, ἐπὶ τῇ ἐξόδῳ τοῦ βίου τυγχανέτωσαν τῆς κοινωνίας.

[*The preceding grades of penance.*]

Can. 20.

[Mansi, II. 520.]

Ἐάν τις γυνὴ μοιχευθῇ ἢ μοιχεύσῃ τις, ἐν ἑπτὰ ἔτεσι δοκεῖ (δεῖ) αὐτὸν τοῦ τελείου τυχεῖν κατὰ τοὺς βαθμοὺς τοὺς προάγοντας.

[*Defined grades of penance.*]

Can. 21.

[Mansi, II. 520.]

Περὶ τῶν γυναικῶν τῶν ἐκπορνεουσῶν καὶ ἀναιρουσῶν τὰ γεννώμενα καὶ σπουδαζουσῶν φθόρια ποιεῖν ὁ μὲν πρότερος ὅρος μέχρις ἐξόδου ἐκώλυσεν, καὶ τούτῳ συντίθενται· φιλανθρωπότερον δὲ τι εὐρόντες ὠρίσαμεν δεκαετῆ χρόνον κατὰ τοὺς βαθμοὺς τοὺς ὠρισμένους.

[*A wilful murderer is to do penance among the Fallers, and may be communicated at death.*]

Can. 22.

[Mansi, II. 520.]

Περὶ ἐκουσίων φόνων, ὑποπιπτέτωσαν μὲν, τοῦ δὲ τελείου ἐν τῷ τέλει τοῦ βίου καταξιούσθωσαν.

[*Unintentional homicide. Two former regulations cited. Penance according to the defined grades.*]

Can. 23.

[Mansi, II. 520.]

Ἐπὶ ἀκουσίων φόνων, ὁ μὲν πρότερος ὅρος ἐν ἑπταετία κελεύει τοῦ τελείου μετασχεῖν κατὰ τοὺς ὠρισμένους βαθμούς· ὁ δὲ δεύτερος τὸν πενταετῆ χρόνον πληρῶσαι.

[*Penance according to the defined grades (sorcery).*]

Can. 24.

[Mansi, II. 521.]

Οἱ καταμαντενόμενοι καὶ ταῖς συνηθείαις τῶν χρόνων ἐξακολουθοῦντες ἢ εἰσάγοντές τινες εἰς τοὺς ἑαυτῶν οἴκους ἐπὶ ἀνευρέσει φαρμακειῶν ἢ καὶ καθάρσει, ὑπὸ τὸν κανόνα πιπτέτωσαν τῆς πενταετίας κατὰ τοὺς βαθμοὺς ὠρισμένους, τρία ἔτη ὑποπτώσεως καὶ δύο ἔτη εὐχῆς χωρὶς προσφορᾶς.

**Concilium Ancyranum.**

[*Penance according to the defined grades (sin with two sisters).*]

Can. 25.

[Mansi, II. 521.]

Μνηστευσάμενός τις κόρην προσεφθάρη τῇ ἀδελφῇ αὐτῆς, ὡς καὶ ἐπιφορέσαι αὐτήν· ἔγημε δὲ τὴν μνηστὴν μετὰ ταῦτα, ἥ δὲ φθαρεῖσα ἀπήγξατο· οἱ συνειδότες ἐκελεύσθησαν ἐν δεκαετία δεχθῆναι εἰς τοὺς συνεστῶτας κατὰ τοὺς ὠρισμένους βαθμούς.

[*A priest guilty of fornication to be thrust out of the Church, and brought to penance.*]

**Concilium Neo-Cæsareense (c. A.D. 320).**

Can. 1.

[Mansi, II. 539.]

Πρεσβύτερος ἐὰν γήμη, τῆς τάξεως αὐτὸν ματατίθесθαι, ἐὰν δὲ πορνεύσῃ ἢ μοιχεύσῃ, ἐξωθεῖσθαι αὐτὸν τέλος καὶ ἄγεσθαι αὐτὸν εἰς μετάνοιαν.

[*A woman marrying two brothers to be thrust out till death. Penance only admitted on repudiation of union.*]

Can. 2.

[Mansi, II. 539.]

Γυνὴ ἐὰν γήμηται δύο ἀδελφοῖς, ἐξωθείσθω μέχρι θανάτου, πλὴν ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ, διὰ τὴν φιланθρωπίαν, εἰποῦσα ὡς ὑγιάνασα λύσει τὸν γάμον, ἐξεῖ τὴν μετάνοιαν· ἐὰν δὲ τελευτήσῃ ἢ γυνὴ ἐν τοιούτῳ γάμῳ οὔσα ἦτοι ὁ ἀνὴρ, δυσχερὲς τῷ μέιναντι ἢ μετάνοια.

[*The fixed duration of penance for repeated marriages is well known.*]

Can. 3.

[Mansi, II. 539.]

Περὶ τῶν πλείστοις γάμοις περιπιπτόντων ὁ μὲν χρόνος σαφὴς ὁ ὠρισμένος, ἡ δὲ ἀναστροφὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις αὐτῶν συντέμνει τὸν χρόνον.

[*No penance assigned for lustful desires.*]

Can. 4.

[Mansi, II. 539.]

Ἐὰν πρόθηταί τις ἐπιθυμῆσαι γυναικὸς συγκαθευδῆσαι μετ' αὐτῆς, μὴ ἔλθῃ δὲ εἰς ἔργον αὐτοῦ ἢ ἐνθύμησις, φαίνεται ὅτι ὑπὸ τῆς χάριτος ἐβρύσθη.

[*If a catechumen among the Kneelers commit sin, he is to be placed among the Hearers.*]

Can. 5.

[Mansi, II. 539.]

Κατηχούμενος, ἐὰν εἰσερχόμενος εἰς κυριακὸν ἐν τῇ τῶν κατηχουμένων τάξει στήκῃ, οὗτος δὲ ἁμαρτάνων, ἐὰν μὲν γόνυ κλίνων, ἀκροάσθω μηκέτι ἁμαρτάνων. Ἐὰν δὲ καὶ ἀκροώμενος ἔτι ἁμαρτάνῃ, ἐξωθείσθω.



[Two classes of catechumens.]

**Theodore Balsamon.**

*In can. 5.*

[Migne, P. G., CXXXVII. 1208.]

*In canones synodi Neo-cæsarianæ.*

Δύο τάξεις τῶν κατηχομένων εἰσίν. Οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἄρτι προσέρχονται, καὶ ὡς ἀτελέστεροι, μετὰ τὴν ἀκρόασιν τῶν γραφῶν καὶ τῶν θείων εὐαγγελίων εὐθὺς ἐξίσαισι· οἱ δὲ ἤδη προσήλθον, καὶ γεγονάσι τελεώτεροι ὅθεν καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ τοῖς κατηχομένοις εὐχὴν ἀναμένοντες, τὸ γόνυ κλίνουνσιν ἐν ταύτῃ ὅταν δὲ ἐκφωνηθῇ τὸ, οἱ κατηχούμενοι προέλθετε, τότε ἐξέρχονται καὶ οὗτοι.

[The clergy of the Cathari may on submission to the Church retain their clerical standing after receiving the imposition of hands.]

**Concilium Nicænum (A.D. 325).**

*Can. 8.*

[Mansi, II. 672.]

Περὶ τῶν ὀνομαζόντων μὲν ἑαυτοὺς καθαρούς ποτε, προσερχομένων δὲ τῇ καθολικῇ καὶ ἀποστολικῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἔδοξε τῇ ἀγίᾳ καὶ μεγάλῃ συνόδῳ, ὥστε χειροθετούμενους αὐτοὺς μένειν οὕτως ἐν τῷ κλήρῳ· πρὸ πάντων δὲ τοῦτο ὁμολογῆσαι αὐτοὺς ἐγγράφως προσήκει ὅτι συνθήσονται καὶ ἀκολουθήσουσι τοῖς τῆς καθολικῆς καὶ ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας δόγμασι· τοῦτ' ἔστι καὶ διγάμοις κοινωνεῖν καὶ τοῖς ἐν τῷ διωγμῷ παραπεπτωκόσιν· ἐφ' ὧν καὶ χρόνος τέτακται, καὶ καιρὸς ὥριστα· ὥστι αὐτοὺς ἀκολουθεῖν ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς δόγμασι τῆς καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας. . . .

[Lapsed persons in clerical office are to be deposed.]

*Can. 10.*

[Mansi, II. 672.]

Ὅσοι προεχειρίσθησαν τῶν παραπεπτωκότων κατὰ ἄγνοιαν, ἣ καὶ προειδόντων τῶν προχειρισμένων τοῦτο οὐ προκρίνει τῷ κανόνι τῷ ἐκκλησιαστικῷ· γνωσθέντες γὰρ καθαιροῦνται.

[Graded penance for those who had lapsed under Licinius.]

*Can. 11.*

[Mansi, II. 673.]

Περὶ τῶν παραβάντων χωρὶς ἀνάγκης ἢ χωρὶς ἀφαιρέσεως ὑπαρχόντων ἢ χωρὶς κινδύνου, ἢ τινος τοιούτου, ὃ γέγονεν ἐπὶ τῆς τυραννίδος Λικινίου, ἔδοξε τῇ συνόδῳ, καὶ ἀνάξιοι ἦσαν φιλανθρωπίας ὅμως χρηστεύσασθαι εἰς αὐτούς· ὅσοι οὖν γνησίως μεταμέλονται, τρία ἔτη ἐν ἀκροωμένοις ποιήσουσιν οἱ πιστοί, καὶ ἐπτά ἔτη ὑποπεσοῦνται· δύο δὲ ἔτη χωρὶς προσφορᾶς κοινωνήσουσι τῷ λαῷ τῶν προσευχῶν.

[Graded penance for Christians who have reverted to military service.]

*Can. 12.*

[Mansi, II. 673.]

Οἱ δὲ προσκληθέντες μὲν ὑπὸ τῆς χάριτος, καὶ τὴν πρώτην ὁρμὴν ἐνδειξάμενοι, καὶ ἀποθέμενοι τὰς ζώνας, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἐπὶ τὸν οἰκεῖον ἔμετον ἀναδραμόντες ὡς κύνες, ὡς τινὰς καὶ ἀργύρια προσέσθαι, καὶ βενεφικίους κατορθῶσαι τὸ

**Concilium Nicænum**

ἀναστρατεύσασθαι· οὗτοι δέκα ἔτη ὑποπιπτέτωσαν μετὰ τὸν τῆς τριετοῦς ἀκροάσεως χρόνον. ἐφ' ἅπασιν δὲ τούτοις προσήκει ἐξετάζειν τὴν προαίρεσιν, καὶ τὸ εἶδος τῆς μετανοίας. ὅσοι μὲν γὰρ καὶ φόβῳ καὶ δάκρυσιν καὶ ὑπομονῇ καὶ ἀγαθοεργίαις τὴν ἐπιστροφὴν ἔργῳ καὶ οὐ σχήματι ἐπιδείκνυνται, οὗτοι πληρώσαντες τὸν χρόνον τὸν ὁρισμένον τῆς ἀκροάσεως, εἰκότως τῶν εὐχῶν κοινωνήσουσι, μετὰ τοῦ ἐξεῖναι τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ, καὶ φιλανθρωπότερον τε περὶ αὐτῶν βουλεύσασθαι. ὅσοι δὲ ἀδιαφόρως ἤνεγκαν, καὶ τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ εἰσιέναι εἰς τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν ἀρκεῖν αὐτοῖς ἡγήσαντο πρὸς τὴν ἐπιστροφὴν, ἐξάπαντος πληρούτωσαν τὸν χρόνον.

[*At death all may receive the viaticum.*]

Can. 13.

[Mansi, II. 673.]

Περὶ δὲ τῶν ἐξοδεόντων ὁ παλαιὸς καὶ κανονικὸς νόμος φυλαχθήσεται καὶ νῦν, ὥστε, εἴ τις ἐξοδεύει, τοῦ τελευταίου καὶ ἀναγκαιοτάτου ἐφοδίου μὴ ἀποστερεῖσθαι· εἰ δὲ ἀπογνωσθεὶς καὶ κοινωνίας πάλιν τυχὼν, πάλιν ἐν τοῖς ζῶσιν ἐξετασθῇ, μετὰ τῶν κοινωνούντων τῆς εὐχῆς μόνης ἔστω· καθόλου δὲ καὶ περὶ παντὸς οὐτινοσοῦν ἐξοδεύοντος, αἰτούντος τοῦ μετασχεῖν Εὐχαριστίας, ὁ ἐπίσκοπος μετὰ δοκιμασίας ἐπιδότω.

[*Grades for catechumens who have lapsed.*]

Can. 14.

[Mansi, II. 673.]

Περὶ τῶν κατηχουμένων καὶ παραπεσόντων ἔδοξε τῇ ἀγίᾳ καὶ μεγάλῃ συνόδῳ, ὥστε τριῶν ἐτῶν αὐτοὺς ἀκρωμένους μόνον, μετὰ ταῦτα εὔχεσθαι μετὰ τῶν κατηχουμένων.



## THE NICENE PERIOD

(A.D. 300 TO A.D. 350)

IN the fourth century reference may first be made to a grave conflict of parties within the Catholic community in the city of Rome in the years A.D. 307-309. Rome.  
Conflict of  
parties.

The Damasine epitaphs of Marcellus and Eusebius, bishops of Rome in the early years of the fourth century, disclose a struggle of those bishops with the party of laxity which is otherwise a forgotten chapter of history. These epitaphs are of the deepest interest for the Church historian. They are due to Damasus, who was himself bishop of Rome for the eighteen years from A.D. 366 to A.D. 384, and who laboured with zeal and devotion to bring to light the tombs of the martyrs, which had been blocked up and hidden during the last persecution. He composed inscriptions in honour of these Roman martyrs, which he caused to be engraved on marble slabs. The inscription for the tomb of Marcellus (bp. A.D. 307-309) is given among the authorities printed above. It may be thus translated:— Marcellus  
and Euse-  
bius, A.D.  
366-384,  
required  
discipline  
of the  
lapsed.

“Because, a true ruler, he had appointed to the lapsed that they should bewail their crimes, he was held as a bitter enemy by all these wretched men. Hence there follow madness, hatred, variance, disputations, sedition, bloodshed : the bands of peace are loosed. He was banished beyond the borders of his country by the ferocity of the tyrant on account of the offence of another, who denied Christ in time of peace. These circumstances within his knowledge Damasus has wished to relate that the people might appreciate the merit of Marcellus.”

A similar inscription in honour of Eusebius (bp. A.D. 309) runs as follows:—

“Heraclius forbade the lapsed to grieve for their sins. Eusebius taught the unhappy ones to bewail their offences. In the growing madness the people are divided into factions : sedition, bloodshed, war, variance, disputes ensued. Both alike were banished on a sudden by the ferocity of the tyrant ; the ruler when he was maintaining unsevered the bands of peace. He bore his exile in joy, relying on the Lord as his judge, and left the world and this life on the Trinacrian shore.”

Riot and  
bloodshed.

Interven-  
tion of the  
civil  
authority.

From these two inscriptions, referring to the short episcopates of Marcellus and Eusebius, which were both included in the years A.D. 307-309, we gather that there was at that time a most bitter conflict of opinion in the church of Rome, which led not only to angry contention, but to riot and bloodshed, with the result that the "tyrant" Maxentius interposed and exiled the leaders of the rival factions. The dispute was as to the terms of the re-admission of the lapsed to communion.

The persecution which is connected with the name of Diocletian had raged for two or three years from its commencement in A.D. 303. "To understand the horror of the persecution it must be borne in mind that it was similar to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, a sudden subversion of legal security, a sudden disruption of peaceable society, nay, a sudden withdrawal of imperial favour."<sup>1</sup> To the Christian community it had been a terrible experience. Now it would seem that its horrors were past. If the historical indications of the two Damasine epitaphs may be accepted the Christians at Rome in the days of Marcellus and Eusebius were on the whole at peace with the civil authorities, and were accordingly able to review the happenings of the time of terror. These did not call for complacency. The defection had once more been appalling,<sup>2</sup> and the events now taking place at Rome seem to indicate that the apostates of the imperial city were of no little account. The two prelates Marcellus and Eusebius insisted on the penance of the lapsed. They may have maintained the decision of the Council of Rome of A.D. 251 that, while the lapsed were to be reconciled before death, lifelong penance was to be required. Heraclius, named in the inscription of Eusebius, was the leader of the party of laxity, and seems to have demanded that the full concession of present communion should be made to all, as had been conceded by the Council of Carthage in A.D. 252 when the persecution of Gallus was impending. This Heraclius is presumably the same person as the man referred to in the other inscription as having been the cause of the exile of Marcellus, and as having himself denied Christ. It is stated that his apostasy had been aggravated by the fact that it occurred "in time of peace."

The picture thus presented to us of the Roman Christian community in the first decade of the fourth century is sufficiently startling. All the time there has to be reckoned with the separatist community of the Novatianists, perhaps not a little supercilious in presence of the disorders which were distracting the Catholic Christians. And amongst the Catholics themselves is found this sharp contention as to whether continued penance is or is not to be demanded of the lapsed; parties embittered to the point of

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Birks, *Dict. Ch. Ant.*, Art. "Martyrs."

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, *H.E.*, VIII. 3. μυρίοι δ' ἄλλοι τὴν ψυχὴν ἐπὶ δειλίας προναρκήσαντες, προχείρως οὕτως ἀπὸ πρώτης ἐξησθένησαν προσβολῆς.



physical strife; war (*bellum*) and bloodshed (*cædes*) resulting; and the civil power intervening to maintain the peace.

There is in existence another reference to the penitential discipline of the church of Rome in the time of Marcellus. It occurs in the *Liber Pontificalis*, a record of the popes, the first compilation of which Duchesne assigns to about A.D. 514. The *Liber* states that Marcellus instituted twenty-five titles, or districts (*quasi diocesis*) in the city of Rome "on account of the Baptism and Penance (*pœnitentiam*) of the many persons who were being converted from the pagans, and on account of the sepulchres of the martyrs." The *Liber Pontificalis*, while as a compilation it is not less than two hundred years posterior to the time of Marcellus, is derived from various documents and traditions of unequal authority. Assuming that there is ground for the statement that Penance as well as Baptism and the care of the sepulchres of the martyrs afforded reason for the appointment of the twenty-five parish priests of Rome, it must be understood that at this period their duties were concerned rather with the preparatory work than with the formal reconciliation of penitents. The same would be the case as regards the solemnization of Baptism. Duchesne points out that at Rome both those solemnities required the presence of the bishop, and would take place in a general rather than in a parochial assembly.<sup>1</sup> With this proviso it may well be that the institution of the parish priests was valuable alike for the preparation of converts before Baptism, and for the hearing of confessions and the assignment of suitable penances in the case of the lapsed. It is already known to us from the Damatine epitaph that Marcellus insisted on the penance of the lapsed, and also that the lapsed were sufficiently numerous or important to evoke a controversy which was rending the Church. It appears probable that, safeguarding the final act of reconciliation to the bishop, the rest of the functions of a priest penitentiary were now ordinarily performed by the priests of the twenty-five titles.

The *Liber Pontificalis*. The twenty-five titles of Marcellus.

The priests would hear confessions and assign penances.

From Rome we pass into the very different atmosphere of the church of Spain. The Council of Illiberris,<sup>2</sup> which is identified with Elvira in Granada, was held early in the fourth century. Its date has been the subject of much difference of opinion. The note which accompanies the acts states that they were "published in the times of Constantius, at the same time that the Nicene synod was held." Some of the acts add *era* 362. The Spanish *era* referred to (and which was not used in Spain till a century later than the council) began from B.C. 38, and the date *era* 362 would accordingly be equivalent to A.D. 324. But there are grave reasons for rejecting this date, which after all has no better support than the note cited, a note which seems to have been

Spain. Council of Illiberris.

<sup>1</sup> *Liber Pontificalis*, I. 165.

<sup>2</sup> According to Mendoza *Illiberris* is the correct spelling.

added at a later time, and which is already inaccurate in coupling the name of Constantius with the date of Nicæa.<sup>1</sup> (1) To begin with, Hosius of Corduba, who was present at Illiberris, is known not to have been in Spain in A.D. 324. (2) Also several of the canons of the synod are referable to a period which was either contemporary with or immediately after a violent persecution in which a considerable number of Christians had apostatised. The last persecution of Spanish Christians was that under Diocletian and Maximianus Herculius in the years A.D. 303–305. (3) In the third place, it will be seen that this synod has hardly yet moved from the old pre-Decian rigorism as regards apostates. But by A.D. 314 at Arles the Spanish representatives will be found signing the decisions of that council in the more indulgent sense now common in the West. For such a change of front the interval of a decade seems none too long. A date not far from A.D. 306 will here be preferred. In July of that year the prohibition of Christianity was repealed by Constantine, and public Christian assemblies no longer stood outside the law.

*Circa* A.D.  
306.

Illiberris a  
Spanish  
council,

but of all  
Spain.

Stern pro-  
visions.

Spain had  
not budged.

The Council of Illiberris was an exclusively Spanish council, but the nineteen bishops named in the synodical acts are bishops of sees in widely different parts of Spain, and the council appears to have been a fair representation of the Christian community of the peninsula. It may be said of the church of Spain that it was not at this time immediately controlled by any external churches. Spain was indeed fully within the comity of the churches of the West, as is evidenced alike by the correspondence of S. Cyprian, and by that of the bishops of Rome. None the less in current controversies the Spanish church was likely to have a line of her own. The isolated position of the peninsula, in some touch with Rome, with Carthage, and with the Provincia of Mediterranean Gaul, but entirely cut off from the farther Christendom, encouraged the formation of conviction uninfluenced from without. The stern disciplinary spirit, which has characterised the Spanish church through all her history, in spite of the successive floods of immigration, and the resultant modifications of national type, is found already at work at the outset of the fourth century. The canons of Illiberris are, in fact, the last authoritative expression in a considerable synod of the Catholic Church of the rigorism which had prevailed in the preceding time. As such they have been a great difficulty to scholars. Morinus, gravely impressed by the incompatibility of these canons with the practice of the Catholic Church after A.D. 300, boldly affirms that the date of the council must be put back to A.D. 250. This, however, is impossible, if only for the reason that Hosius of Corduba, who was present at Illiberris and appended his signature to its canons, was also present at Nicæa in A.D. 325. The simple explanation is that Spain had not by A.D. 300 followed the altered practice of

<sup>1</sup> If this is the right reading.



the rest of the Church. The Spanish church is not Novatianist. She takes up no attitude of schism: she excommunicates no church outside. But she has not appreciably budged since the days before the Decian persecution. In this light the canons of Illiberris are full of interest. The first enacts that

“whosoever being of adult age has after (receiving) the faith of saving Baptism betaken himself to the temple of an idol to render idol worship (*idolaturus*), and has committed what is a capital crime, because it is of the highest degree of wickedness, it pleased the council that such an one should not receive communion even at the end.”<sup>1</sup>

Severe  
canons.

It appears to be assumed as admitted that a “capital crime” is irremissible on earth: it is inferred that the idolatry of an apostate must be a capital crime, because there is clearly nothing worse: and it is concluded that offenders may not be reconciled even at death.

A group of three canons deals with the interesting case of those Christian converts, who were the holders of hereditary office as *flamines* or priests of particular deities. Such office often entailed civic duties, with perhaps considerable attendant expenditure. It would seem that, if a person was legally bound to the tenure of such an office, it was hardly open to him to throw it up. *Flamines* who were Christians would obviously avoid officiating at heathen sacrifices: but would all the more endeavour to take their part in public life by making provision for the public games, or other civic celebrations. It was, however, difficult to do even this without offence to the Christian moral code, for if the games included gladiatorial combats, those responsible were held guilty of bloodshed; and if the representations of the theatre were foul and obscene, as they commonly were, there was added the responsibility for impurity or *mæchia*. Consequently, a *flamen* who went so far as to carry out his whole official programme, as in times of persecution he would be pressed to do, might be guilty in Christian eyes of the three capital sins; of idolatry, of homicide, and of adultery.

Accordingly, canon 2 lays down that

“*flamines*, who after the faith of the laver and of regeneration have sacrificed, the more if they have doubled their offences by the addition of homicide, or tripled the crime by the cohesion of adultery, it pleased the council that these should not receive communion even at the end.”

This canon is of interest as showing the weight still attaching to the ancient technical enumeration of the three capital sins of

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that the *Didascalia Apostolorum* (A.D. 260) also says: “There is no sin greater than idolatry.” Is the canon of Illiberris quoting from the *Didascalia*, or perhaps even from some earlier document behind it?

idolatry, bloodshed, and impurity, as well as in its maintenance of the antique rigour of discipline.

The third canon provides that such *flamines* as had avoided the act of sacrifice, but had incurred guilt by providing the public *munus*, might at the end of life receive communion, but only after due penance performed (*acta legitima pœnitentia*). If after this they should again offend by the same sin of "adultery," they were not again to be communicated, "lest they should seem to play with the communion of the Lord."

That any sins of wilful homicide should be regarded as capital sins, and accordingly left to the Divine judgment after death, would only be in keeping with the general temper of this council. Yet in canon 5 it is laid down that, if a mistress inflamed by jealous fury shall have whipped a handmaid in such sort that the woman dies in pain within three days, leaving some uncertainty as to whether the mistress intended her death or not; the mistress, if held to have intended the death, is to perform seven years' penance, and, if not, five years' penance. Communion was to be accorded in either case if the penitent were to fall ill during the period of penance. It is hardly possible to escape the impression that the moderate terms of the penalties imposed for this very grave offence are mainly due to the servile condition of the victim.

The sixth canon forbids communion even at death to any one who had killed another by *maleficium*, magic or sorcery, which is stated to have involved idolatry.

The seventh canon is of much interest :—

"If any *fidelis* who had lapsed into adultery, and afterwards performed his penance for the appointed time, shall then again have committed fornication, it pleased (the council) that he should not have the communion even at the end."

Here it is clearly understood that a person who had been guilty of adultery would be assigned a penance of fixed duration, after which he would be admissible to communion: but that, if he then repeated the offence, communion in this life was not again open to him. The position here is not the position of Tertullian, or of the Novatianists. Adultery is admitted to penance and absolution. But this might only be once. And in this restriction the Catholic Church elsewhere would at this period be in general sympathy.

Examples of rigorism are to be found in canons 8, 10, 12, 13, 17, which prohibit communion even at death to women who have left their husbands without cause and attached themselves to other men (c. 8); to a woman *fidelis* united to a catechumen who has deserted his innocent wife (c. 10); to a mother or other *fidelis* who has acted as a procuress (c. 12); to dedicated virgins who



have committed a carnal sin without acknowledging their offence <sup>1</sup> (c. 13); and to persons who have married their daughters to the priests of idols (c. 17).

By canon 19 bishops, priests, and deacons, who have been detected in adultery (? impurity generally) are not to be communicated even at the end "on account of the scandal, and on account of the profane crime."

In canon 25 is found an echo of the old Decian controversy as to the letters of confessors. It appears that a Christian about to travel would still sometimes provide himself with the letter of a confessor as being a superior kind of spiritual passport. The title of *Confessor* in such documents is to be struck out, and the person provided with ordinary letters of communion. This provision was repeated a few years later at Arles. Letters of confessors.

In canon 31 it is provided that young men who had been guilty of fornication might when they married be admitted to communion, due penance having been performed (*acta legitima pœnitentia*). This canon again is noticeable as showing that the standpoint of Illiberris is not that of Tertullian or, speaking generally, of the Novatianists, but the Catholic standpoint of the pre-Decian period. Canon 30 prohibits the ordination of such young men to the sub-diaconate. Fornicators admitted to penance.

Canons 45 and 46 deal with an interesting case of disloyalty under stress of persecution, which has not come under notice in the records of earlier times, but which appears to have been a feature of the persecution under Diocletian in Spain. An inconspicuous Christian, whether *fidelis* or catechumen, might simply leave off coming to church, or connecting himself in any way with Christian life or practice. This abstention might go on for an indefinite time (*per infinita tempore*). It can be readily understood that it would not be everywhere that every person would be called upon to sacrifice. Such persons as these would simply drop out of reckoning as being Christians. When in the after time of security the person expressed a desire to return to the Church canon 46 provides in the case of a *fidelis* that if he has not sacrificed he may be admitted to communion after ten years. The catechumen who had acted similarly was not to be refused Baptism (c. 45) for that he had only given way to the "old man" (*in veterem hominem deliquisse*). Christians who dropped out in time of persecution.

Canon 47 deals with the case of a married man who has often committed adultery. At the approach of death he may be communicated, if he promises to amend his ways in case of recovery. If, however, on recovery he offend in the same way, communion is not again to be open to him. He has "played with the communion of peace." Repeated adultery.

Canon 53, which orders that communion is only to be restored The bishop  
<sup>1</sup> *non intelligentes quod amiserint*, perhaps "without appreciating their loss."

who ex-  
cludes is to  
restore.

Spain  
belated.

by the bishop who has withheld it, is an important provision for the penitential discipline.

From the canons cited it will have been seen how curiously out of touch with the Catholic practice of the day elsewhere was the Spanish Christianity of the beginning of the fourth century. At Carthage, at Rome, at Alexandria, at Antioch, the capital offender, even in apostasy and idolatry, could once in this life find penance with Absolution. The church of Spain is where she was before the Decian persecution. And the explanation of the startling enactments of Illiberris is simply this: that they are a belated provincial expression of the pre-Decian rigorism.

No graded  
penance.

It should be noted that as in other early Western statements of discipline there is no indication of the graded system of penitential observance which had by this time taken shape in the Asian provinces.

S. Peter of  
Alexandria  
(abp. A.D.  
300-311).

From another centre of Church life, the great Eastern city of Alexandria, there now comes new and important evidence of penance assigned after lapse in this same persecution of Diocletian, and of reconciliation to be accorded when the penance was fulfilled. It is to be found in the *Canonical Epistle*, as it is styled, of S. Peter, who was archbishop of Alexandria from the year A.D. 300 until his death as a martyr in A.D. 311. Eusebius describes S. Peter as a wonderful teacher of the faith, and as "an admirable specimen of a bishop, alike in the excellence of his conduct, and in his familiarity with Scripture."<sup>1</sup> The *Canonical Epistle* consists of fourteen chapters, regulations, or *canons* as they are commonly called. In several of the Greek manuscripts a fifteenth canon is added from a work of S. Peter on Easter.

The *Canoni-  
cal Epistle*.

Penance  
and recon-  
ciliation  
admitted.

The penances assigned are remarkable as showing that whereas at Rome the Christian community was in an uproar regarding penance, and in Spain the lapsed Christian found no admission to communion in this life, at Alexandria there is imposed by the bishop a system of penances of varying duration, adapted to the measure of the offence in each case, and in no case of very extended or extreme character.

The date of the *Canonical Epistle* may be taken as A.D. 306. The persecution under Diocletian had begun in the Lent of A.D. 303, and S. Peter begins his epistle with the words: "But since the fourth passover of the persecution has arrived." The date is therefore much the same as that of the Council of Illiberris, and is two or three years earlier than the Roman experiences under Marcellus and Eusebius.

Provisions.

For those who lapsed in frailty under torment S. Peter holds it sufficient if they fast with prayer for forty days (Can. I).

"It is sufficient in the case of those who have been apprehended and thrown into prison, and who have sustained

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, VIII. 13; IX. 6.



torments not to be borne, and stripes intolerable, and many other dreadful afflictions, and afterwards have been betrayed by the frailty of the flesh : even though they were not at the first received on account of their grievous fall which followed, yet because they contended greatly and resisted much ; for they did not come to them of their own will, but were betrayed by the frailty of the flesh ; for they show in their bodies the marks of Jesus, and some are now for the third year bewailing their fault ; it is sufficient that from the time of their approach other forty days should be enjoined on them by way of a remembrance, those forty days during which our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ had fasted. He was yet after He had been baptized, tempted of the devil. And when they shall have, during these days, exercised themselves much, and constantly fasted, then let them watch in prayer. . . .”

For those who without suffering torments have simply lapsed as prisoners a year's penance is judged suitable (Can. II). For those who without either torment or imprisonment had yet lapsed in mere cowardice it is right that the barren fig-tree should give an example (Can. III). The Lord had said to the dresser of His vineyard : “ Behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree and find none : cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground ? ” And he answering said unto Him, “ Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it.” Balsamon understands this canon as prescribing exclusion for three years. Zonaras holds that four years are required. For those who by dissimulation had contrived to avoid sacrifice, six months' penance is enjoined.

“ . . . have mocked the snares of their enemies, either passing by the altars, or giving a writing, or sending heathen to do sacrifice instead of themselves ; even though some of the confessors have pardoned certain of these, as I have heard, for that particularly they had with much caution avoided touching the fire with their own hands, and the offering of incense to the unclean demons : yet inasmuch as they had escaped notice by doing this, let a period of six months' exercise in penance be imposed.”

Canons VI and VII deal with the interesting case of Christian slaves who had been sent by Christian masters to sacrifice. For the slaves a year's penance is assigned : from the masters three years are required.

These are the only cases in which penance is assigned. Canon IV is a lamentation over *lapsi* who had not repented. Canon VIII refers to those who, having lapsed on one occasion, had availed themselves of a second opportunity to confess their Lord. The mind of the Church about such is now clear. They may be joyfully received to communion. Among these, however, were to be found some who had in too great self-confidence voluntarily

rushed on persecution and then failed. Even these, if they afterwards restored themselves by standing firm, might now communicate. But the clergy among them, though they may communicate, are not to minister in their offices. Persons who had voluntarily submitted to persecution to support other Christians were to be held free from blame for temerity. Censure was not to be accorded to those who had escaped by paying an indemnity in money; nor to those who had abandoned their homes in flight. There was also to be considered the case of those who had been forced to compliance. Balsamon in his note writes:—

“For it happened sometimes that they were thrown upon the ground, and hooks or pieces of iron put into their mouths to keep them open, and then the tyrants poured wine down their throats, or threw into them pieces of meat; or, putting hot coals into their hands together with incense, they compelled them to sacrifice.”

On sufficient evidence ministers who had thus suffered violence were to be placed in the ministry among the confessors.

The kindly and lenient temper of the canons of S. Peter of Alexandria was not in his day acceptable to all the Egyptian Christians. It should not be overlooked that it led to the opposition of Meletius, bishop of Lycopolis in Upper Egypt, and to the long-continued schism which bore his name.

Council of  
Arles, A.D.  
314.

The important Council of Arles in A.D. 314 was a widely representative assembly. It was summoned by command of the emperor Constantine. Eusebius has preserved a letter of the emperor in which he says: “We gave orders that very many (πλείστους) bishops from various and unspeakably (ἀμυθήτων) many places should assemble in the city of Arles by the Kalends of August.”<sup>1</sup> The number of those present has been variously given. One tradition goes as high as 600. The names appended to the records of the council include 33 bishops besides priests and deacons. But among the bishops named are to be found, besides the home bishops of the province of Vienne, bishops from Sicily, from Campania and Apulia, from Dalmatia, from northern Italy: those classed as from the Gauls comprise bishops from the regions known to us as northern and western France, the Rhineland, the British islands, Spain, and Sardinia, while one of them is from Mauretania: several signatures are of bishops from the province of Africa: from the Roman province three bishops sign besides the presbyters representing pope Sylvester. The Council of Arles was thus a more representative assembly than any which had yet met in the West.

The 22nd canon of this council rules:—

“Concerning those who apostatise and never present themselves before the Church, or seek at all to do penance, and

<sup>1</sup> H.E., X. 5.



who afterwards when overcome by sickness ask for communion, it pleased (the council) that communion should not be given to them, except in the case of their recovering and bringing forth worthy fruits of penance."

It will be noticed that in this canon the reconciliation by the Church of apostates who in time of health have presented themselves before the Church and done penance is assumed: while the reconciliation of those who after recovering from sickness bring forth worthy fruits of penance is explicitly sanctioned. It thus appears that the position generally arrived at after the Decian persecution is confirmed. To the apostate penance and reconciliation are now open: but, as had already been decided in the First Council of Carthage under Cyprian (A.D. 251) apostate persons who have shown no signs of penitence in health are not to be reconciled upon their death-beds.

Apostates  
repenting  
in health  
are recon-  
ciled.

The adoption of this position by the widely representative Council of Arles some sixty years later than the Decian persecution is significant of the general acceptance by that time of the milder judgment throughout the West. The maintenance of the older rigorism in Spain by the Council of Illiberris in the early years of the fourth century has been already adverted to. The contrast between the councils of Arles and Illiberris in this respect is the more remarkable from the fact that among those present at Arles were the Spanish bishop Liberius of Emerita (Merida), and priests from Bætica, Urso (Osuna), Tarragona, Saragossa, and Basti (Baza in Granada). Evidence that the canons of Illiberris were known and considered at Arles is to be found in the fact that canon 9 of Arles repeats canon 25 of Illiberris, and that others of the canons are clearly related to those of Illiberris.

Contrast  
of Arles  
and Illi-  
berris.

Canon 14 of the Council of Arles, which rules that those who falsely accuse their brethren are not to be communicated in this life, deals with an exceptional case. It deals, in fact, with a particular case, being directed, like canon 13, against the adversaries of Felix of Aptonga. It need hardly detain the student of Penance.

Other  
canons of  
Arles.

Canon 16 requires that persons excluded from communion are only to be restored in the place where communion had been withdrawn. This in effect repeats canon 53 of Illiberris.

It should be noted that at Arles, as at Illiberris, there is no indication of the acceptance of the Eastern system of graded penance.

The Council of Arles represents the West of Christendom: another council held in the same year reflects the temper of an important tract in the East. The Council of Ancyra, the chief city of the province of Galatia, which is usually assigned to the year A.D. 314, was a provincial synod of eighteen bishops. The province of Galatia adjoins that of Pontus. The systematisation

Council of  
Ancyra,  
A.D. 314.

In Asia  
the graded  
system.

It spreads  
from  
Pontus.

Not  
adopted at  
Antioch  
or in  
Palestine.

Canons of  
Ancyra  
assigning  
grades.

of the grades of penance as practised by S. Gregory Thaumaturgus in Neo-Cæsarea of Pontus in A.D. 260 has in A.D. 314 become for Ancyra the firmly established use. The canons of discipline have nothing to determine as to penance except the grades of penance to be assigned, and the duration of the penance to be performed in each grade. This development into a crystallised system in the churches of the provinces of Asia Minor<sup>1</sup> is very remarkable when compared with the conditions still existing in the West. At Arles in this very year A.D. 314 nothing is known of long terms of graded penance. Even the apostate is only required in general terms to show worthy fruits of penitence (*dignos fructus pœnitentiæ*). Some exceptional cases are excluded from reconciliation. But where penance is admitted no long terms or graded penances are assigned. In the provinces of Asia, however, there has been a rapid development. Starting, as appears from Neo-Cæsarea in Pontus, the system of S. Gregory Thaumaturgus has by A.D. 314 not only found acceptance, but has become the rigid use of the churches of all the surrounding provinces. In view of the geographical position of the province of Pontus we should expect to find that any movement spreading from Pontus would first affect the provinces of Cappadocia and Galatia. And this is doubtless what actually occurred. Later in the century S. Basil at Neo-Cæsarea in Cappadocia will be found appealing to a long tradition of such discipline. And in this synod of Ancyra the practice approved in Galatia is sufficiently clear. It is unfortunately not very easy to determine what further provinces were represented at the synod. There are three different lists of the bishops present, but no one of these is of undoubted authenticity.<sup>2</sup> In the longest list besides the bishops of the provinces of Asia Minor are found the names of Vitalis of Antioch in Syria, and of the bishops of Cæsarea and Neapolis in Palestine. There is, however, good ground for believing that the system of the Asian provinces never found a home either at Antioch or in Palestine. In the Asian provinces it may well have taken shape with some uniformity. And this will best explain its appearance in the canons of Nicæa.

The fourth canon of Ancyra rules that persons who have cheerfully sacrificed and partaken of the sacrificial feasts should remain one year among the *Hearers*, three years among the *Fallers*, and for two years should have fellowship in the *Prayer* only. Afterwards would follow full reconciliation (τὸ τέλειον).

Canon 5 orders that those who when complying showed signs of grief should at once take their place among the *Fallers*. If to sacrifice they had added participation in the feast the period to be spent among the *Fallers* should be three years: if they had only sacrificed, two years. A further year was to be passed before full reconciliation.

<sup>1</sup> The term Asia will be generally used in these pages of the Asian peninsula.

<sup>2</sup> See Hefele, *Conciliengeschichte*, I. iii, § 18 (ed. Freiburg-i-B., 1873, p. 220).



The penitents after the time spent by them as *Fallers* were to be received *χωρὶς προσφορᾶς*, *without offering*. This term has been much disputed. Some have thought that *προσφορᾶς* refers to the offering of the Holy Eucharist. Persons so restricted were clearly debarred from communion: and it is perhaps preferable to understand *προσφορᾶς* of the offerings made by the faithful, and presented in the service; in which privilege of offering the unreconciled might claim no part.<sup>1</sup>

The unreconciled have no part in the offerings.

Canon 6 deals with the case of another class of lapsed persons, those who yielded on the first threat of punishment or confiscation, and who prior to the assembly of the council had not repented or returned, but who now expressed a desire to do so. These till the Easter feast were to take their place among the *Hearers*; for three years following to be *Fallers*; for two years more to have fellowship without offering, and so to come to full reconciliation. Their time of penance was thus to be something under six years: and for those who had already submitted to penance the six years might be allowed to date from the commencement of the penance. Such persons might at any time be admitted to communion on the approach of death; it being however understood that, if they recovered, they would still perform their penance.<sup>2</sup>

Canon 16 rules that persons guilty of lying with beasts, if under twenty years of age, are to remain for fifteen years among the *Fallers*, and five more in the fellowship of the *Prayers*, before admission to communion. Serious habitual cases are to be subjected to a longer term among the *Fallers*. The most serious cases, those of adult married persons, are to spend twenty-five years among the *Fallers*, and five more years in the fellowship of the *Prayers*, before reconciliation. Such persons, if over fifty years of age, are only to be communicated on the approach of death.

This canon is well worthy of notice. The sin is among the gravest: but the length of penance assigned is stupendous. This is the first instance on record of the assignment of a definite term of years of such great length. The Church is drawing back from the concessions of the persecution days. The principle of reconciliation for capital offenders is with one hand admitted: but with the other it is all but withdrawn by the extension of the term of penance.

Extended terms of penance.

Attention may be called to the phrase *κατὰ τοὺς ὁρισμένους βαθμούς*, "according to the defined grades," in canons 21, 23, 24, and 25, and to the phrase *κατὰ τοὺς βαθμοὺς τοὺς προάγοντας*, "according to the preceding grades" in canon 20. In Ancyra in A.D. 314 by a widely representative synod the system of graded penance can be referred to as in recognised force. The grades

The "defined grades."

<sup>1</sup> Compare the rejection of their offerings in the *Didascalia*.

<sup>2</sup> So Zonaras explains the provision.

are the "defined" grades. It may also be noticed that in canon 25 the technical term *συνεστῶτας* is employed for the grade of the *Bystanders*, although in the previous canons the grade has been indicated by other forms of expression such as "fellowship in the *Prayers*."

The significance of Ancyra is the spread of the graded system.

The canons which have been cited may be taken as sufficiently illustrating what is the great significant fact of the Council of Ancyra, the establishment as an ordered system of the graded penances which had spread from Pontus. It shows one feature which S. Gregory the Wonderworker had not ventured upon. It fixes the term of years to be spent in each grade. The length of some of these exercises of penance has become very considerable.

Homicide.

The provisions of this council as regards homicide are of great interest. Homicide is of the three capital sins the least in evidence in Christian records. The sin of adultery had been the subject of violent dispute in the days of Callistus and Tertullian. The sin of apostasy had occupied the minds of all at the time of the Decian persecution. But the sin of homicide was happily never a sin of general incidence: it never filled the horizon of men's thoughts and passions: and the vicissitudes of the discipline which dealt with it are hard to trace. This may be illustrated from the references of canon 23, which cites two regulations which had found vogue as regards unintentional homicide, of neither of which is anything otherwise known. The first of these had assigned seven years, the second only five years, of penance "according to the defined grades." Canon 22 rules that a person guilty of wilful murder is to do penance among the *Fallers*, and that he may be communicated at the approach of death.

Reconciliation admitted to offenders in the three capital sins.

It thus appears that sinners by apostasy, impurity, or bloodshed are by the synod of Ancyra all admitted to reconciliation in this life; whereas by the older discipline offenders in any of these three capital sins had been refused reconciliation in this life, and reserved for the judgment of the Lord at the Great Day. The churches of the Asian provinces have attained to this position by A.D. 314, and from it there will be no return.

Council of Neo-Cæsarea, c. A.D. 325

The Council of Neo-Cæsarea in Cappadocia appears to have been held at some time between the councils of Ancyra and Nicæa. Hefele points out that whereas the Council of Ancyra is much concerned with the lapsed, this is not so with the Council of Neo-Cæsarea; and infers that Neo-Cæsarea must be several years the later.<sup>1</sup> The place must not be confused with the Neo-Cæsarea of Pontus: but the graded system appears to be in force. Canon 5 rules that a catechumen who offends, if he is at present placed as a *Kneeler* (*γόνυ κλίνων*) or *Faller*, must become a *Hearer*. If as a *Hearer* he still offends he is to be thrust out. These provisions show catechumens as occupying the two grades of *Fallers* and *Hearers*, and confirm the view taken above

Grades of catechumens.

<sup>1</sup> *Conciliengeschichte*, I. iii, § 17 (p. 243).



that the penitential grades historically owe their origin to the assimilation of penitents to the varied grading of the catechumens.<sup>1</sup> For certain grave offences, as the fornication of a priest (canon 1), or a woman's marriage with her husband's brother (canon 2), the person is to be thrust out (ἐξωθείσθω) and then to proceed to penance.<sup>2</sup> The thrusting out places the persons in the position otherwise known as that of *Mourners*. The subjection of a priest to such expulsion and to ordinary penance is noticeable.

Expulsion  
precedes  
penance.

The gravity of sins of lustful desire has been one of the recurring problems of the administration of Penance. Impurity is one of the capital or mortal sins; and it is now commonly agreed in the West that a sin of impure desire fully and wilfully consented to has the capital or mortal effect of removing the person from the state of life or grace, and placing him in the state of death or sin. Yet it is obvious that there can be a wide interval in heinousness between certain sins of this character, and certain other sins of completed act. The fourth canon of Neo-Cæsarea rules:—

Sins of  
desire.

“If any entertain the desire to lie with a woman, but his desire does not come to fulfilment, it is to be understood that he has been saved by grace.”

The canon thus provides that no penance is to be assigned for sins of desire in the public penitential system of the Church.

For these  
no public  
penance.

In canon 3 it is stated that the duration of penance for persons who have married several times is well known (ὁ μὲν χρόνος σαφὴς ὁ ὀρισμένος). This definite assignment of the duration of penance is a feature which distinguishes the practice of the days of Ancyra and Neo-Cæsarea from those of S. Gregory Thaumaturgus. The canon goes on to provide that the time may be shortened in cases where the conduct and faith of the persons justify it.

Penance  
for persons  
who have  
married  
several  
times.

The great Council of Nicæa (A.D. 325) comes next for consideration. That council, the first of the councils received as general, was convened in response to an imperial summons addressed to the bishops throughout the empire. The number of bishops who attended the council is traditionally given as three hundred and eighteen. There were present bishops or representatives of bishops from the most distant provinces alike of East and West. The town of Nicæa was situated on the borders of the lake Ascanius, and could be readily reached by water from the Propontis. It was a town of the province of Bithynia, a province which lay along the southern shore of the Euxine, and

Council  
of Nicæa,  
A.D. 325.

Nicæa  
in touch  
with the  
graded  
system.

<sup>1</sup> Part of the note of Theodore Balsamon on canon 5 is printed above with the canon. He states that there were two orders of catechumens, the more advanced and the less advanced.

<sup>2</sup> In the case of the woman in canon 2 penance is admitted only on repudiation of the union.

which was a neighbour of the provinces of Galatia and Pontus. This is worthy of note in connexion with the references made to the graded system of penance.

It need hardly be said that the interest of the Nicene council centres on a very different subject from that of the penitential discipline. It is identified in the minds of all Christian men with the definitive statement that our Lord Jesus Christ is in His Divine nature consubstantial with the Father. Also the Easter controversy and the Meletian schism claimed attention.

The  
*Cathari*.

Some of the recorded canons are, however, interesting as regards the discipline of penance; and throw light on the progress of events in the Church during the seventy-four years which had elapsed since the Decian persecution. The eighth canon rules as follows:—

“With regard to those who call themselves *Cathari*, the holy and great synod decides that, if they wish to enter the Catholic and Apostolic Church, they must submit to imposition of hands, and they may then remain among the clergy: they must above all promise in writing to conform to and follow the doctrines of the Catholic and Apostolic Church; that is to say, they must communicate with those who have married a second time, and with those who have lapsed under persecution; for whom also a time (of penance) has been fixed, and an occasion (of reconciliation) determined, so that they may follow in all things the teachings of the Catholic Church.”

From this canon it appears that the separatists whom we have hitherto known as Novatianists have assumed the name of *Cathari*: they are the *Puritans* of their age. They are still severe in their exclusion of the penitent lapsed, and some of them at least appear to have adopted an attitude which savours of the old Montanism towards those who had entered into a second marriage. Schismatics they are, and open reconciliation is required of them: but heretics they are not, and on their giving in their adhesion in writing to the teachings of the Catholic Church they may, if clergy, continue in their clerical office in the Catholic Church. The canon speaks of imposition of hands, and this has been differently understood. Zonaras and Balsamon, the two leading Greek canonists of the middle ages, understood this imposition of the Novatianist ordination already received, so that the meaning would be that whosoever had been ordained by the Novatianists must remain among the clergy.<sup>1</sup> Gratian seems to have understood that a re-ordination was required.<sup>2</sup> The words may perhaps be more rightly understood as requiring that an imposition of hands should take place for the purpose of

<sup>1</sup> Migne, *P. G.*, CXXXVII. 264, 265.

<sup>2</sup> *Corpus juris canonici*, c. 8, C. 1, qn. 7. So, too, Isidorus Mercator (Mansi, II. 688).



reconciliation, such imposition not having the character of ordination.<sup>1</sup> It will be found that the practice of reconciling schismatics and also heretics by a laying on of hands became very general in the churches of the West.

On the reconciliation of a bishop of the Cathari, he would take his place as a priest, unless the bishop should see fit to share with him the *τιμὴ* of the name; a term which indicates the dignity or precedence of the episcopal office, and may perhaps also carry a reference to its emoluments.

As regards the advancement of lapsed persons to clerical office the Nicene council maintains the position taken up after the Decian persecution. No lapsed persons must be found among the officiating clergy of the Church. Clerical office barred to the lapsed.

“The *lapsi*, who have been ordained in ignorance of their fall, or in spite of the knowledge which the ordainers had of it, are no exception to the law of the Church, for they are excluded as soon as their unworthiness is known (can. 10).”

Three of the Nicene canons refer to the graded system of penance as an established institution. They are canons 11, 12, 14. Canon 11 rules:— References to the graded system.

“Regarding those who lapsed during the tyranny of Licinius without compulsion, or confiscation of goods, or peril, or any such pressure, it seemed good to the Synod, although such were unworthy of kindness, to be benevolent towards them notwithstanding: as many therefore as sincerely repent, being *fideles*, shall fulfil three years among the *Hearers*, and seven years shall be *Fallers*: for two years farther they shall take part with the people in the *Prayers*, without oblation.” Lapsed *fideles*.

The twelfth canon, which assigns three years among the *Hearers* and ten among the *Fallers* to Christians who have reverted to military service, is not easy to understand, especially as the utterance of a council under the presidency of the emperor. Hefele and others interpret it of the followers of Licinius in his struggle against Constantine and Christianity. Whatsoever the explanation may be, the reference to the grades of penance is made without hesitation as to an accepted institution. Those who evidence the reality of their conversion by “fear and tears and patience and good works” may perhaps after their term of *Hearing* share in the *Prayers*. Also it is within the competence of the bishop to take more lenient counsel with regard to them. This saving of the discretion of the bishop which recurs in various later canons of penance is worthy of careful note. In practice it made the rigour of the canons tolerable: and we may suspect that it often reduced them to a dead letter. In conclusion this Military service.

<sup>1</sup> So Dionysius Exiguus (Mansi, II. 680).

canon judges that persons who show indifference in their penance, and regard the mere penitential exclusion as an adequate expression of contrition, should be required to fulfil the term prescribed.

Canon 14 is as follows :—

Lapsed  
catechu-  
mens.

“The holy and great synod orders that catechumens who have lapsed be only *Hearers* for three years; and afterwards may join in prayer with the catechumens.”

What is the significance of these various references to the grades of *Hearers*, *Fallers*, and sharers in the *Prayers*, in the canons of the great general Council of Nicæa? Up to this time there has been no indication that the Church of the West knew anything of such grading of penance. Yet it may well be, as already suggested, that the system of dividing catechumens into (1) *Hearers*, who might stand in the narthex, and (2) *Fallers* who might humbly share in the devotions of the faithful during the earlier part of the Liturgy, was of very general adoption: and that the placing of penitents somewhere among the catechumens was the generally recognised practice.

Nicæa  
would give  
vogue to  
the graded  
system,

but it is  
never  
established  
in the great  
centres.

With all that large number of bishops who were present from the various provinces of the Asian peninsula the definitely graded system which had spread from Pontus would seem to have been by now an accepted institution. To these the terminology of the canons cited may have been mainly due, while others would understand and accept. It is obvious that the publication of the Nicene canons would give much vogue to the system, and that henceforth we may expect to find it in force in places where it had not been known before. Yet the system will not be found to establish itself with any definiteness or rigour in the great centres of Church life. Thus in Rome itself when towards the close of the fourth century Fabiola made her edifying penance for the fault she had committed in marrying after divorce, there is no trace of grades of penitential observance, or of measured terms of years, but everything indicates one great striking act of penitential humiliation. Nor is it to be assumed that even in the East the system was ever universal. There is nothing to show that in the great centres of population, as Antioch and Constantinople, the system of graded penance and long terms was ever effective, or could be generally imposed. At Antioch S. Chrysostom will be found characterising the system of public penance as intolerable, and long terms as needless, in the tone of a man who speaks to an audience of something external of which they have all heard, but which they do not approve. At Constantinople in A.D. 391 the Patriarch Nectarius will be found abolishing by a stroke of the pen the office of Penitentiary and the whole existing penitential system; a circumstance which seems to show that that system was not only of disputable benefit, but of no great account.



In the provinces of the Asian peninsula the system of graded penances will go on developing for some years to come : and the canons of S. Basil and of S. Gregory of Nyssa will afford interesting evidence of this development. But notwithstanding the impetus given by the Nicene council, the system will be practically confined to the Asian provinces.

It is confined to the Asian provinces.

The thirteenth canon of Nicæa is of great interest :—

“ Regarding those who are passing from life, the ancient and canonical law shall also now be guarded, which forbids that if any be passing he should be deprived of the last and most necessary Viaticum. If, after he has been reconciled, and has regained communion, he is again numbered among the living, let him have place with those who have the fellowship of the *Prayer* only. But, generally, in the case of any soever who is passing, and who asks to partake of the Eucharist, let the bishop give It to him after due investigation.”

Reconciliation for all capital offenders before death.

This canon may be said to finally sum up the results of the great conflict which followed the Decian persecution. In the three-quarters of a century which had passed those results had found acceptance throughout the Catholic Church. There was no capital sin soever with regard to which the Catholic Church did not claim the privilege and admit the responsibility of exercising her Divine Master's commission of Reconciliation here in this present life. This great achievement of her guided counsels finds worthy place in the canons of the great Nicene assembly. Never again will the Church seriously retire from this position. Never will she compromise with the Novatianist temper. But how short were men's memories, or how hardy their assumptions, when they spoke of this as “ the ancient and canonical law ” ! Only eighty years before it would have been hard to find a church in Christendom which had place for the penitent apostate this side the waters of death. At Rome or at Carthage, at Antioch or at Alexandria, stern exclusion ruled. Nay, it was but twenty years before that Hosius of Corduba, who is prominent here in the Nicene council, had signed those canons of Illiberris which were the last expression of the rigorist mind within the borders of the Catholic Church. So startling indeed is this contrast that it may perhaps demand that we should again examine the expression *ὁ παλαιὸς καὶ κανονικὸς νόμος*, *the ancient and canonical law*. The words seem to indicate something more definite than a mere tradition of antiquity. They have the air of citing a known regulation, which can be referred to with the definite article, and the terms of which can be quoted. Is any such regulation extant? Possibly reference may be intended to the sixth canon of the Council of Ancyra. This was certainly canonical, and may perhaps have been referred to as old as being now of eleven years' standing.

This the final summing up of the conflict.

The sixth canon of Ancyra had laid down that persons who had readily lapsed under persecution might pass through the grades of penance and find reconciliation in less than six years : but that if at any time death were approaching they might be admitted to communion on the understanding that if they recovered they would still perform their penance. The thirteenth canon of Nicæa now sanctions the admission to communion on the approach of death of any offenders soever on the same understanding that in case of recovery they are to take their place again among the penitents.

*Résumé  
of the  
chapter.*

In the present chapter have been cited as evidence of the penitential discipline of the Church in the first half of the fourth century (1) the Damasine epitaphs of Popes Marcellus and Eusebius at Rome, and the canons of the councils of (2) Illiberris, and (3) Arles in the West, and of (4) Ancyra, (5) Neo-Cæsarea, and (6) Nicæa in the East.

The Roman evidence shows the resumption of serious penance in the case of the lapsed by the bishops of Rome. It is to be understood that the lapsed are admitted to reconciliation before death, but that the ready and wide indulgence accorded in A.D. 252 at the approach of the persecution of Gallus is no longer countenanced. The Council of Illiberris stands alone on the threshold of the fourth century as an important council which still maintains the pre-Decian attitude. The lapsed are sternly excluded from all hope of reconciliation in this life. The explanation appears to be simply that the provincial church of Spain was belated in its following of Catholic precedent. The Council of Arles was a general council of the West, which could now show the whole Western Church, including Spain, as of one accord in admitting apostates to penance and reconciliation. It is to be noted that nowhere in the West, whether at Rome, in Spain, or in Gaul is there any indication of the acceptance of the system of graded penance which had taken shape in the East.

The Eastern councils of Ancyra, of Neo-Cæsarea, and of Nicæa, all show this system of graded penance at work. The provisions of S. Gregory the Wonderworker have been elaborated in detail, and a striking feature of the canons of Ancyra is that the duration of penance in each grade is now assigned with precision, such duration being in certain cases of inordinate length. The two councils of Ancyra and Neo-Cæsarea were provincial, while Nicæa was œcumenical : but all three councils were held within the Asian peninsula, Ancyra in Galatia, Neo-Cæsarea in Cappadocia, and Nicæa in Bithynia ; and all three councils are found to take the graded system of penance for granted, and to frame their enactments on the basis of it. In the case of Nicæa this is not a little remarkable because outside the canons of the council there is no indication that the universal Church had adopted the system or was prepared to adopt it.



## VII. FROM A.D. 350 TO A.D. 450

### I. THE EASTERN CHURCHES

#### TEXT OF AUTHORITIES

##### 1. Provinces of Asia Minor.

Council of Laodicea (between A.D. 344 and A.D. 363).

S. Basil (A.D. 329–379).

S. Gregory of Nyssa (bishop A.D. 372–395).

##### 2. Antioch.

S. Chrysostom (A.D. 347–407).

Apostolic Canons (collected in second half of fourth century).

##### 3. Constantinople.

Socrates (his history in 7 books treats A.D. 307–439 : born A.D. 408).

Sozomen (his history in 9 books treats A.D. 323–439 : born c. A.D. 400).

##### 4. Alexandria.

S. Athanasius (c. A.D. 296–373).

S. Cyril of Alexandria (died A.D. 447).

S. Isidore of Pelusium (died c. A.D. 449).

### PROVINCES OF ASIA MINOR

[*Sinners in various sins after proportionate penance to be admitted to communion.*]

Concilium Laodicense (between A.D. 344 and A.D. 363).

Can. 2.

[Mansi, II. 563.]

Περὶ τοῦ, τοὺς ἑξαμαρτάνοντας ἐν διαφόροις πταίσμασι, καὶ προσκαρτεροῦντας τῇ προσευχῇ τῆς ἐξομολογήσεως καὶ μετανοίας, καὶ τὴν ἀποστροφὴν τῶν κακῶν τελείαν ποιομένους, κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τοῦ πταίσματος, καιροῦ μετανοίας δοθέντος τοῖς τοιούτοις, διὰ τοὺς οἰκτιρμοὺς καὶ τὴν ἀγαθότητα τοῦ Θεοῦ προσάγεσθαι τῇ κοινωνίᾳ.

[*The imposition of hands upon penitents in the Eucharistic service.*]

Can. 19.

[Mansi, II. 567.]

Περὶ τοῦ, δεῖν ἰδίᾳ πρῶτον μετὰ τὰς ὁμιλίας τῶν ἐπισκόπων, καὶ τῶν κατηχουμένων εὐχὴν ἐπιτελεῖσθαι. καὶ μετὰ τὸ ἐξελθεῖν τοὺς κατηχουμένους,

**Concilium Laodicenum.**

τῶν ἐν μετανοίᾳ τὴν εὐχὴν γίνεσθαι· καὶ τούτων προσελθόντων ὑπὸ χεῖρα, καὶ ὑποχωρησάντων, οὕτως τῶν πιστῶν τὰς εὐχὰς γίνεσθαι τρεῖς· μίαν μὲν τὴν πρώτην διὰ σιωπῆς, τὴν δὲ δευτέραν καὶ τρίτην διὰ προσφωνήσεως πληροῦσθαι, εἴθ' οὕτως τὴν εἰρήνην δίδοσθαι. Καὶ μετὰ τὸ πρεσβυτέρους δοῦναι τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ τὴν εἰρήνην, τότε τοὺς λαϊκοὺς τὴν εἰρήνην διδόναι· καὶ οὕτω τὴν ἁγίαν προσφορὰν ἐπιτελεῖσθαι, καὶ μόνοις ἐξὸν εἶναι τοῖς ἱερατικοῖς εἰσιέναι εἰς τὸ θυσιαστήριον, καὶ κοινωνεῖν.

[*Trigamists by custom have five years' penance; two or three among the Hearers, then among the Bystanders.*]

**S. Basil**, bishop of Cæsarea (A.D. 329–379).

*Epistola canonica prima.*

**Can. 4.**

[Migne, P. G., XXXII. 673.]

Συνήθειαν δὲ κατελάβομεν ἐπὶ τῶν τριγάμων πενταετίας ἀφορισμόν οὐκ ἀπὸ κανόνων, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν προειληφότων ἀκολουθίας. Δεῖ δὲ μὴ πάντη αὐτοὺς ἀπείργειν τῆς ἐκκλησίας, ἀλλ' ἀκροάσεως αὐτοὺς ἀξιῶν ἐν δύο που ἔτεσιν ἢ τρισί· καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐπιτρέπειν συστήκειν μὲν, τῆς δὲ κοινωνίας τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἀπέχεσθαι, καὶ οὕτως ἐπιδειξαμένους καρπὸν τινα μετανοίας ἀποκαθιστᾶν τῷ τοπῷ τῆς κοινωνίας.

[*All the capital sins, homicide, sins of lust, idolatry, entail a like penance. After thirty years' penance for sins of lust, the penitents should be received.*]

**Can. 7.**

[Migne, P. G., XXXII. 674.]

Ἀρρενοφθόροι καὶ ζωοφθόροι, καὶ φονεῖς, καὶ φαρμακοὶ, καὶ μοιχοὶ, καὶ εἰδωολάτραι τῆς αὐτῆς καταδίκης εἰσὶν ἡξιωμένοι. Ὡστε ὅν ἔχεις ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων τύπον, καὶ ἐπὶ τούτων φύλαξον. Τοὺς δὲ ἐν τριάκοντα ἔτεσι μετανοήσαντας ἐπὶ τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ, ἣν ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ ἔπραξαν, οὐδ' ἀμφιβάλλειν ἡμᾶς προσῆκεν εἰς τὸ παραδέξασθαι. Ἡ τε γὰρ ἄγνοια συγγνώμης ἀξίους αὐτοὺς ποιεῖ, καὶ τὸ ἐκούσιον τῆς ἐξαγορεύσεως, καὶ ἡ παράτασις ἐν τοσούτῳ χρόνῳ γενομένη. Σχεδὸν γὰρ ὅλην γενεὰν ἀνθρώπου παρεδόθησαν τῷ Σατανᾷ, ἵνα παιδευθῶσι μὴ ἀσχημονεῖν. Ὡστε κέλευσον αὐτοὺς ἥδη ἀνυπερθέτως δεχθῆναι μάλιστα εἰ καὶ δάκρυα ἔχουσι δυσωποῦντα σου τὴν εὐσπλαγχνίαν, καὶ βίον ἐπιδείκνυνται ἄξιον συμπαθείας.

[*For unpremeditated homicide eleven years' penance is sufficient.*]

**Can. 11.**

[Migne, P. G., XXXII. 681.]

Ὁ δὲ τὸν ἀκούσιον ποιήσας φόνον ἀρκούντως ἐξεπλήρωσε τὴν δίκην ἐν τοῖς ἑνδεκα ἔτεσι.



**S. Basil.**

[Custom counts a wife's unfaithfulness adultery, but a husband's only fornication.]

*Epistola canonica secunda.*

**Can. 21.**

[Migne, P. G., XXXII. 721.]

Εἰ ἀνὴρ γυναικὶ συνοικῶν, ἐπειδὰν, μὴ ἀρκεσθεὶς τῷ γάμῳ εἰς πορνείαν ἐκπέσῃ, πόρνον κρίνομεν τὸν τοιοῦτον· καὶ πλείον αὐτὸν παρατείνομεν ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτιμίοις· οὐ μέντοι ἔχομεν κανόνα, τῷ τῆς μοιχείας αὐτὸν ὑπαγαγεῖν ἐγκλήματι, ἔαν εἰς ἐλευθέραν γάμου ἢ ἁμαρτία γένηται· διότι ἡ μοιχαλὶς μὲν, Μιαινομένη, φησὶ, μιανθήσεται, καὶ οὐκ ἀναστρέψει πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτῆς· καὶ ὁ κατέχων μοιχαλίδα ἄφρων καὶ ἀσεβής· ὁ μέντοι πορνεύσας οὐκ ἀποκλεισθήσεται τῆς πρὸς γυναῖκα ἑαυτοῦ συνοικήσεως. Ὡστε ἡ μὲν γυνὴ ἀπὸ πορνείας ἐπανιόντα τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτῆς παραδέξεται, ὁ δὲ ἀνὴρ τὴν μιανθεῖσαν τῶν οἴκων ἑαυτοῦ ἀποπέμψει.

καὶ τούτων δὲ ὁ λόγος οὐ ῥάδιος· ἡ δὲ συνήθεια οὕτω κεκράτηκε.

[The period of penance assigned (by custom?) for fornication is four years. How to be apportioned among the stations.]

**Can. 22.**

[Migne, P. G., XXXII. 724.]

Ἔστι δὲ ἐν τέσσαρσιν ἔτεσιν ὠρισμένη τοῖς πορνεύουσιν ἡ ἐπιτίμησις. Χρὴ τῷ πρώτῳ ἐκβάλλεσθαι τῶν προσευχῶν, καὶ προσκλαίειν αὐτοὺς τῇ θύρᾳ τῆς ἐκκλησίας· τῷ δευτέρῳ δεχθῆναι εἰς ἀκρόασιν· τῷ τρίτῳ εἰς μετάνοιαν· τῷ τετάρτῳ εἰς σύστασιν μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ, ἀπεχομένους τῆς προσφορᾶς· εἴτα αὐτοὺς ἐπιτρέπεσθαι τὴν κοινωνίαν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ.

[No ancient rule for forcible abduction. Basil assigns three years of exclusion from the Prayers.]

**Can. 30.**

[Migne, P. G., XXXII. 725.]

Περὶ τῶν ἀρπαζόντων κανόνα μὲν παλαιὸν οὐκ ἔχομεν ἰδίαν δὲ γνώμην ἐποησάμεθα· τρία ἔτη καὶ αὐτοὺς καὶ τοὺς συναρπάζοντας αὐτοῖς ἔξω τῶν εὐχῶν γίνεσθαι.

[Clerics guilty of deadly sins to be degraded, but not excluded from lay communion.]

**Can. 32.**

[Migne, P. G., XXXII. 727.]

Οἱ τὴν πρὸς θάνατον ἁμαρτίαν ἁμαρτάνοντες κληρικοὶ τοῦ βαθμοῦ κατὰγονται, τῆς κοινωνίας δὲ τῶν λαϊκῶν οὐκ ἐξείργονται. Οὐ γὰρ ἐκδικήσεις δις ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό.

[Our fathers permitted adulteresses to perform a penance which would not publish their sin.]

**Can. 34.**

[Migne, P. G., XXXII. 728.]

Τὰς μοιχευθείσας γυναῖκας καὶ ἐξαγορεύουσας δι' εὐλάβειαν ἢ ὁπωσοῦν ἐλεγχόμενας, δημοσιεύειν οὐκ ἐκέλευσαν οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν, ἵνα μὴ θανάτου

**S. Basil.**

αἰτίαν παράσχωμεν ἐλεγχθείσας· ἵστασθαι δὲ αὐτὰς ἄνευ κοινωνίας προσέταξαν, μέχρι τοῦ συμπληροῦσθαι τὸν χρόνον τῆς μετανοίας.

[*A deaconess who has committed fornication with a Greek may be admitted to the offering after seven years.*]

Can. 44.

[Migne, P. G., XXXII. 729.]

Ἡ διάκονος ἢ τῷ Ἑλληνι συμπορνεύσασα δεκτὴ ἐστὶν εἰς μετάνοιαν, εἰς δὲ τὴν προσφορὰν δεχθήσεται τῷ ἐβδόμῳ ἔτει, δηλονότι, ἐν ἀγνείᾳ ζῶσα.

[*A wilful homicide may be admitted to communion after twenty years' penance. How apportioned among the stations.*]

Can. 56.

[Migne, P. G., XXXII. 797.]

Ὁ ἐκουσίως φονεύσας, μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο μεταμεληθεὶς, εἴκοσιν ἔτεσιν ἀκοινωνήτος ἔσται τοῖς ἁγιάσμασι. Τὰ δὲ εἴκοσιν ἔτη οὕτως οἰκονομηθήσεται ἐπ' αὐτῷ. Ἐν τέσσαρσιν ἔτεσι προσκλαίειν ὀφείλει, ἔξω τῆς θύρας ἐστὼς τοῦ εὐκτηρίου οἴκου, καὶ τῶν εἰσίωντων πιστῶν δεόμενος εὐχὴν ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ ποιῆσθαι, ἐξαγορεύων τὴν ἰδίαν παρανομίαν. Μετὰ δὲ τὰ τέσσαρα ἔτη εἰς τοὺς ἀκροωμένους δεχθήσεται καὶ ἐν πέντε ἔτεσι μετ' αὐτῶν ἐξελεύσεται. Ἐν ἑπτὰ ἔτεσι μετὰ τῶν ἐν ὑποπτώσει προσευχόμενος ἐξελεύσεται. Ἐν τέσσαρσι συστήσεται μόνον τοῖς πιστοῖς, προσφορᾶς δὲ οὐ μεταλήψεται. Πληρωθέντων δὲ τούτων μεθέξει τῶν ἁγιασμάτων.

[*Unintentional homicide carries ten years' penance. How apportioned.*]

Can. 57.

[Migne, P. G., XXXII. 797.]

Ὁ ἀκουσίως φονεύσας ἐν δέκα ἔτεσιν ἀκοινωνήτος ἔσται τῶν ἁγιασμάτων. Οἰκονομηθήσεται δὲ τὰ δέκα ἔτη ἐπ' αὐτῷ οὕτω. Δύο μὲν ἔτη προσκλαύσει· τρία δὲ ἔτη ἐν ἀκροωμένοις διατελέσει, τέσσαρσιν ὑποπίπτων, καὶ ἐνιαυτῷ συσταθήσεται μόνον καὶ τῷ ἐξῆς εἰς τὰ ἅγια δεχθήσεται.

[*An adulterer incurs fifteen years' exclusion from communion. How apportioned.*]

Can. 58.

[Migne, P. G., XXXII. 797.]

Ὁ μοιχεύσας ἐν ἰεῖ ἔτεσιν ἀκοινωνήτος ἔσται τῶν ἁγιασμάτων· ἐν τέσσαρσι μὲν προσκλαίειν ἔτεσιν, ἐν πέντε δὲ ἀκροώμενος· ἐν τέσσαρσιν ὑποπίπτων, ἐν δυσὶ συνεστὼς ἄνευ κοινωνίας.

[*A fornicator incurs seven years' exclusion from communion.*]

Can. 59.

[Migne, P. G., XXXII. 797.]

Ὁ πόρνος ἐν ἑπτὰ ἔτεσιν ἀκοινωνήτος ἔσται τῶν ἁγιασμάτων· δύο προσκλαίειν, καὶ δύο ἀκροώμενος· καὶ δύο ὑποπίπτων, καὶ ἐν συνεστὼς μόνον τῷ ἡγδόῳ δεχθήσεται εἰς τὴν κοινωνίαν.



**S. Basil.**

[A person who knows of any of the aforesaid sins in another, and does not declare them, incurs an equal length of penance with the offender.]

**Can. 71.**

[Migne, P. G., XXXII. 801.]

Ὁ συνεγνωκὸς ἐκάστῳ τῶν προειρημένων ἁμαρτημάτων, καὶ μὴ ὁμολογήσας, ἀλλ' ἐλεγχθεὶς, τοῦ τοσούτου χρόνου, εἰς ὃν ἐργάτης τῶν κακῶν ἐπιτετίμηται, καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται ἐν ἐπιτιμίῳ.

[The apostate is to remain among the mourners all his life, but to be admitted to communion on the approach of death.]

**Can. 73.**

[Migne, P. G., XXXII. 801.]

Ὁ τὸν Χριστὸν ἀρνησάμενος καὶ παραβὰς τὸ τῆς σωτηρίας μυστήριον, ἐν παντὶ τῷ χρόνῳ τῆς ζωῆς αὐτοῦ προσκλαίειν ὀφείλει, καὶ ἐξομολογεῖσθαι χρεωστῇ, ἐν τῷ καιρῷ ᾧ ἐκβαίνει τοῦ βίου, τοῦ ἀγιάσματος ἀξιούμενος, πίσκει τῆς παρὰ Θεοῦ φιланθρωπίας.

[He who is entrusted with authority to bind and loose may shorten these penalties where the penitence is fervent.]

**Can. 74.**

[Migne, P. G., XXXII. 804.]

Ἐὰν μέντοιγε ἕκαστος τῶν ἐν τοῖς προγεγραμμένοις ἁμαρτήμασι γενομένων σπουδαῖος γένηται ἐξομολογούμενος· ὁ πιστευθεὶς παρὰ τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ φιλανθρωπίας λύειν καὶ δεσμεῖν, εἰ φιλανθρωπότερος γένοιτο, τὸ ὑπερβάλλον τῆς ἐξομολογήσεως ὁρῶν τοῦ ἡμαρτηκότος, εἰς τὸ ἐλαττώσαι τὸν χρόνον τῶν ἐπιτιμιῶν, οὐκ ἔσται καταγνώσεως ἄξιος· τῆς ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς ἱστορίας γνωρίζουσης ἡμῖν τοὺς μετὰ μείζονος πόνου ἐξομολογουμένους ταχέως τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ φιλανθρωπίαν καταλαμβάνειν.

[All these canons are to approve the fruits of penitence. Not time only but the measure of repentance to be regarded. No part with those who prefer their own laxity.]

**Can. 84.**

[Migne, P. G., XXXII. 808.]

Πάντα δὲ ταῦτα γράφομεν, ὥστε τοὺς καρποὺς δοκιμάζεσθαι τῆς μετανοίας. Οὐ γὰρ πάντως τῷ χρόνῳ κρίνομεν τὰ τοιαῦτα, ἀλλὰ τῷ τρόπῳ τῆς μετανοίας προσέχομεν. Ἐὰν δὲ δυσανοσπάστως ἔχωσι τῶν ἰδίων ἐθῶν, καὶ ταῖς ἡδοναῖς τῆς σαρκὸς μᾶλλον δουλεύειν θέλωσιν ἢ τῷ Κυρίῳ, καὶ τὴν κατὰ τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον ζωὴν μὴ καταδέχονται, οὐδεὶς ἡμῖν πρὸς αὐτοὺς κοινὸς λόγος. Ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἐν λαῷ ἀπειθεὶ καὶ ἀντιλέγοντι δεδιδάγμεθα ἀκούειν, ὅτι Σώζων σῶζε τὴν σεαυτοῦ ψυχὴν.

[S. Basil after defining varying lengths of penance for various sins, at the end left all to those in authority.]

**Zonaras** (commenting on Can. 74 of S. Basil).

[Migne, P. G., CXXXVIII. 784.]

Ἀπαριθμησάμενος ὁ μέγας Βασίλειος διαφόρους χρόνους ἐπιτιμιῶν πρὸς διάφορα ἁμαρτήματα, τελευταῖον τὸ πᾶν τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν ἀνέθετο. Οὗτοι γὰρ

**Zonaras.**

οἱ τὸ δεσμεῖν καὶ λύειν ἐμπιστευθέντες παρὰ Θεοῦ, καὶ εἰ ὀρῶεν οὗτοι, φησὶ, τοὺς ἐξομολογουμένους σπουδαίους ὄντας καὶ θερμότητα ἐν τῇ μετανοίᾳ ἐπιδεικνυμένους, καὶ ἐλαττώσι διὰ τοῦτο τοὺς ὠρισμένους χρόνους οὐκ ἔσονται καταγνώσεως ἄξιοι.

[Any form of apostasy involves lifelong penance. Communion accorded when death imminent, but if the person recover, he is to be again excluded.]

**S. Gregory of Nyssa (c. A.D. 335–395).**

*Epistola canonica ad S. Letoium Melitines episcopum.*

[Migne, P. G., XLV. 225.]

Τούτων τοίνυν κατὰ τὸν εἰρημένον διακρινηθέντων τρόπον, ὅσα μὲν ἁμαρτήματα τοῦ λογιστικοῦ τῆς ψυχῆς ἄπτεται μέρους, χαλεπώτερα παρὰ τῶν Πατέρων ἐκρίθη καὶ μείζονος καὶ διαρκεστέρας καὶ ἐπιπονωτέρας τῆς ἐπιστροφῆς ἄξια· οἷον εἴ τις ἡρνήσατο τὴν εἰς Χριστὸν πίστιν, ἢ πρὸς Ἰουδαϊσμόν, ἢ πρὸς εἰδωλολατρείαν, ἢ πρὸς Μανιχαϊσμόν, ἢ πρὸς ἄλλο τι τοιοῦτον ἀθείας εἰδους αὐτομολήσας ἐφάνη, ὁ μὲν ἐκουσίως ἐπὶ τὸ τοιοῦτον ὁρμήσας κακὸν, εἴτα καταγνοὺς ἑαυτοῦ, χρόνον τὸν τῆς μετανοίας ἔχει, ὅλον τὸν τῆς ζωῆς αὐτοῦ. Οὐδέποτε γὰρ μυστικῆς ἐπιτελουμένης εὐχῆς, μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ προσκυνῆσαι τὸν Θεὸν καταξιοῦται, ἀλλὰ καταμόνας μὲν εὔξεται τῆς δὲ κοινωνίας τῶν ἁγιασμάτων καθόλου ἀλλότριος ἔσται· ἐν δὲ τῇ ὥρᾳ τῆς ἐξόδου αὐτοῦ, τότε τῆς τοῦ ἁγιάσματος μερίδος ἀξιωθήσεται. Εἰ δὲ συμβαίῃ παρ' ἐλπίδας ζῆσαι αὐτὸν, πάλιν ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ κρίματι διαβιώσεται, ἀμέτοχος τῶν μυστικῶν ἁγιασμάτων μέχρι τῆς ἐξόδου γινόμενος.

[Those who lapsed under torture are allowed a determined period of penance.]

[Migne, P. G., XLV. 225.]

Οἱ δὲ βασάνοις καὶ τιμωρίαις χαλεπαῖς αἰκισθέντες, ἐν ῥητῷ χρόνῳ ἐπιτήθησαν, οὕτω τῶν ἁγίων Πατέρων φιλανθρωπία ἐπ' αὐτῶν χρησαμένων, ὡς οὐχὶ ψυχῆς γεγεννημένης ἐν πτώματι, ἀλλὰ τῆς σωματικῆς ἀσθενείας πρὸς τὰς αἰκίας οὐκ ἀντισχύουσης. Διὸ τῷ μέτρῳ τῶν ἐν πορνείᾳ πλημμελησάντων, καὶ ἡ βεβιασμένη τε καὶ ἐπώδυνος παράβασις ἐν τῇ ἐπιστροφῇ συνεμετρήθη.

[Distinction between offenders spontaneously confessing and those apprehended in their offence.]

[Migne, P. G., XLV. 228.]

Διαφορὰ δὲ τίς ἐστίν ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῆς μετανοίας, καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν κατὰ ἡδονὴν πλημμελούντων τοιαύτη. Ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ πρὸς τὴν ἐξαγόρευσιν τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁρμήσας, αὐτῷ τῷ καταδέξασθαι δι' οἰκείας ὁρμῆς γενέσθαι τῶν κρυφίων κατήγορος· ὡς ἤδη τῆς θεραπείας τοῦ πάθους ἀρξάμενος, καὶ σημεῖον τῆς πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον μεταβολῆς ἐπιδειξάμενος, ἐν φιλανθρωποτέροις γίνεται τοῖς ἐπιτιμίοις. Ὁ δὲ φωραθεὶς ἐπὶ τῷ κακῷ, ἢ διὰ τινος ὑποψίας ἢ κατηγορίας



**S. Gregory of Nyssa.**

ἀκουσίως ἀπελεγχθεὶς, ἐν ἐπιτεταμένη γίνεται τῇ ἐπιστροφῇ· ὥστε καθαρισθέντα δι' ἀκριβείας αὐτὸν, οὕτως ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν ἁγιασμάτων κοινωνίαν παραδεχθῆναι.

[Nine years' penance in three grades for fornication. But the οἰκονομῶν may shorten the term.]

[Migne, P. G., XLV. 229.]

\*Ἔστι τοίνυν ὁ κανὼν τοιοῦτος, ὥστε τοὺς ἐν πορνείᾳ μολυνθέντας, ἐν τρισὶ μὲν ἔτεσι καθόλου τῆς εὐχῆς ἀποβλήτους εἶναι· ἐν τρισὶ δὲ τῆς ἀκροάσεως μετέχειν μόνης, ἐν ἄλλοις δὲ τρισὶν ἔτεσι μετὰ τῶν ἐν τῇ ἐπιστροφῇ ὑποπιπτόντων προσεύχεσθαι, καὶ τότε μετέχειν τῶν ἁγιασμάτων. Ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν σπουδαιότερον κεχηρμένων τῇ ἐπιστροφῇ, καὶ τῷ βίῳ δεικνύντων τὴν πρὸς τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐπάνοδον, ἕξεστι τῷ οἰκονομοῦντι πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον τὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴν οἰκονομίαν, συντεμεῖν τὸν χρόνον τῆς ἀκροάσεως, καὶ τάχιον εἰς ἐπιστροφὴν ἀγαγεῖν, καὶ πάλιν καὶ τοῦτον συντεμεῖν τὸν χρόνον, καὶ τάχιον ἀποδοῦναι τὴν κοινωνίαν, ὅπως ἂν τῇ ἑαυτοῦ δοκιμασίᾳ ἐκκρίνη τὴν τοῦ θεραπευομένου κατάστασιν.

[For adultery and other grave offences of lust, the period of penance to be doubled. But as before the term may be modified for a fervent penitent.]

[Migne, P. G., XLV. 229.]

\*Ἡ δὲ κατὰ μοιχείαν ἦτοι καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ εἶδη τῆς ἀκαθαρσίας γενομένη παρανομία, καθὼς προείρηται, κατὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ χρίματι θεραπευθήσεται, ἐν ᾧ καὶ τὸ τῆς πορνείας ἄγος· τῷ δὲ χρόνῳ διπλασιάζεται. Παρατηρηθήσεται δὲ καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἢ τοῦ θεραπευομένου διάθεσις, ὃν τρόπον καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν τῷ μολυσμῷ τῆς πορνείας συννεχθέντων, ὥστε ἢ θάπτον ἢ βραδύτερον γενέσθαι αὐτοῖς τὴν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μετουσίαν.

[Twenty-seven years for wilful homicide. This may be relaxed by the penitentiary.]

[Migne, P. G., XLV. 232.]

\*Ἐπὶ τούτων τοίνυν ὁ μὲν φόνος, εἰς τριπλασίονα χρόνον παρατείνεται, τοῖς δι' ἐπιστροφῆς θεραπευομένοις τὸ ἐκούσιον ἄγος. Τρισεννέα γάρ εἰσιν ἐνιαυτοὶ, καθ' ἕκαστον βαθμὸν τῆς ἐννάδος τῶν ἐτῶν ὀρισθείσης, ὥστε ἐν μὲν τῷ παντελεῖ ἀφορισμῷ, ἐνναετὴ χρόνον διαγενέσθαι ἀπειργόμενον τῆς ἐκκλησίας· ἄλλα δὲ τοσαῦτα ἔτη ἐν τῇ ἀκροάσει παραμεῖναι, μόνης τῶν διδασκάλων καὶ τῆς τῶν γραφῶν ἀκροάσεως, καὶ μετὰ τῆς τοῦ λαοῦ συστάσεως ἀξιούμενον, ἐν δὲ τρίτῃ ἐννάδι, μετὰ τῶν ὑποπιπτόντων ἐν τῇ ἐπιστροφῇ προσευχόμενον, οὕτως ἐλθεῖν ἐπὶ τὴν μετουσίαν τοῦ ἁγιάσματος· δηλαδή καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ τοιοῦτου, ἢ αὐτῇ προστήρησις ἔσται παρὰ τοῦ οἰκονομοῦντος τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ πρὸς λόγον τῆς ἐπιστροφῆς συντημηθήσεται αὐτῷ καὶ ἡ τοῦ ἐπιτιμίου παράτασις, ὥστε ἀντὶ ἐννέα ἐτῶν, ἐφ' ἑκάστῳ βαθμῷ ὀκτὼ ἢ ἐπτὰ ἢ ἕξ, ἢ καὶ πέντε μόνᾳ γενέσθαι· εἴπερ τὸ μέγεθος τῆς ἐπιστροφῆς νικοῖ τὸν χρόνον, καὶ

**S. Gregory of Nyssa.**

ὑπερβάλλοιτο τῇ σπουδῇ τῆς διορθώσεως τοὺς ἐν τῇ μακρᾷ προθεσμίᾳ ῥαθυμότερόν πως ἑαυτοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς κηλίδος καθαίροντας.

[*The penance suitable for secret theft; when the person has confessed the offence to the priest.*]

[Migne, P. G., XLV. 233.]

Ὁ δὲ δι' ὑφαιρέσεως λανθανούσης σφετεριζόμενος τὸ ἀλλότριον, εἴτα δι' ἐξαγορεύσεως τὸ πλημμέλημα αὐτοῦ τῷ ἱερεῖ φανερώσας, τῇ περὶ τὸ ἐναντίον τοῦ πάθους σπουδῇ θεραπεύσει τὴν ἀρρώστιαν· λέγω δὲ διὰ τοῦ τὰ προσόντα παρέχειν τοῖς πένησιν, ἵνα τῷ προέσθαι ἃ ἔχει, φανερὸς γένηται καθαρεύων τῆς κατὰ πλεονεξίαν νόσου. Εἰ δὲ μηδὲν ἔχει, μόνον δὲ τὸ σῶμα ἔχει, κελεύει ὁ Ἀπόστολος διὰ τοῦ σωματικοῦ κόπου τὸ τοιοῦτον ἐξιλάσασθαι πάθος.

**ANTIOCH**

[*Examples of capital sins not outside God's mercy.*]

**S. Chrysostom (A.D. 347–407).**

*Ad Theodorum lapsum.*

4.

[Migne, P. G., XLVII. 281.]

Καὶ μή μοι τοὺς ὀλίγα ἡμαρτηκότας εἶπης, ἀλλ' ἔστω τις πάσης κακίας ἀνάμεστος, καὶ πάντα πραττέτω τὰ ἀποκλείοντα τῆς βασιλείας αὐτὸν, καὶ οὗτος μὴ τῶν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἀπίστων, ἀλλὰ τῶν πιστῶν, καὶ εὐηρεστηκότων τῷ Θεῷ πρότερον ὢν, ὕστερον γινέσθω πόρνος, μοιχός, μαλακός, κλέπτης, μέθυσος, ἀρσενοκοίτης, λοιδόρος, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα τὰ τοῦτοις ὅμοια· οὐδὲ γὰρ τοῦτον ἐγὼ ἀποδέξομαι ἀπογινώσκοντα ἑαυτοῦ, κἂν εἰς ἔσχατον γῆρας ἐλάσῃ μετὰ τῆς ἀφάτου καὶ τηλικαύτης κακίας.

[*God repels not true penitence even for the worst sins: and accepts imperfect penitence.*]

6.

[Migne, P. G., XLVII. 284.]

Γοιαύτη γὰρ ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ φιланθρωπία· οὐδέποτε μετάνοιαν γινομένην εἰλικρινῶς ἀποστρέφεται, ἀλλὰ κἂν πρὸς αὐτό τις τῆς κακίας ἐλάσῃ τὸ πέρας, κακείθεν ὑποστρέψαι Πάλιν ἔλθαι πρὸς τὴν τῆς ἀρετῆς ὁδὸν, καὶ δέχεται καὶ προσίεται τοῦτον, καὶ πάντα ποιεῖ ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν προτέραν κατάστασιν ἐπαναγαγεῖν καὶ τὸ πολλῷ τούτου φιλανθρωπότερον· κἂν γὰρ μὴ πᾶσάν τις ἐπιδείξηται τὴν μετάνοιαν, οὐδὲ τὴν βραχείαν καὶ πρὸς ὀλίγον γεγεννημένην παραπέμπεται, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταύτη τίθησι πολὺν τὸν μισθόν.

[*Penitence is judged not by the length of time but by the temper of the mind. Instances are the Ninevites, the penitent thief, the martyrs.*]

6.

[Migne, P. G., XLVII. 284.]

Τὸ δὲ, σήμερον, ἐν παντὶ τῷ βίῳ λέγεσθαι δυνατόν, καὶ πρὸς αὐτῷ δὲ, εἰ βούλει, τῷ γήρᾳ· οὐ γὰρ χρόνων ποσότητι, ἀλλὰ διαθέσει ψυχῆς ἡ μετάνοια



**S. Chrysostom.**

κρίνεται. Καὶ γὰρ οἱ Νινευῖται οὐ πολλῶν ἐδεήθησαν ἡμερῶν, ὥστε ἐξαλειψαί τὴν ἁμαρτίαν αὐτῶν, ἀλλ' ἴσχυσε βραχὺς τῆς ἡμέρας καιρὸς ἅπασαν ἀφανίσαι τὴν ἀνομίαν αὐτῶν· καὶ ὁ ληστής δὲ οὐκ ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῷ τὴν εἰς τὸν παράδεισον εἰσοδὸν ἤνυσεν, ἀλλ' ὅσῃν ἂν ἀναλώσειεν ὥραν τις ῥῆμα φθεγγόμενος ἐν, ἐν τοσαύτῃ ῥοπῇ τὰ ἐν παντὶ τῷ βίῳ ἡμαρτημένα ἅπαντα ἀπολουσάμενος, καὶ πρὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων τὸ τῆς εὐδοκιμήσεως βραβεῖον ἐλάμβανεν. Ὅρωμεν δὲ καὶ τοὺς μάρτυρας, οὐκ ἐν πολλοῖς ἔτεσιν, ἀλλ' ἐν ἡμέραις ὀλίγαις, πολλάκις δὲ καὶ ἐν μιᾷ μόνον, τοὺς λαμπροὺς ἐπιτιθεμένους στεφάνους.

[*Despair induces a madness akin to that of Satan, which comes of despair.*]

16.

[Migne, P. G., XLVII. 302.]

Το γὰρ ἀπογινώσκειν ἑαυτῶν, οὐ τοῦτο μόνον ἔχει τό κακὸν, ὅτι τὰς πύλας ἡμῖν ἀποκλείει τῆς πόλεως ἐκείνης, οὐδ' ὅτι εἰς μείζονα ῥαθυμίαν ἄγει καὶ καταφρόνησιν, ἀλλ' ὅτι καὶ εἰς ἀπόνοιαν ἐμβάλλει σατανικὴν. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ ὁ διάβολος οὐδαμῶθεν ἐτέρωθεν τοιοῦτος ἐγένετο, ἀλλ' ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ πρότερον μὲν ἀπογινῶναι, ὕστερον δὲ ἐκ τῆς ἀπογνώσεως εἰς ἀπόνοιαν ἐμπεσεῖν.

[*The priests cannot, like civil officers, exercise coercive authority. The penitents are voluntary. Need of tact to induce them to subject themselves to the remedies of the priests and that they may feel grateful for their healing.*]

*De Sacerdotio.*

ii. 3.

[Migne, P. G., XLVIII. 634.]

Οὔτε γὰρ ἡμῖν ἐξουσία τοσαύτη παρὰ τῶν νόμων δέδοται πρὸς τὸ κωλύειν τοὺς ἁμαρτάνοντας, οὔτε, εἰ καὶ ἔδωκαν, εἴχομεν ὅπου χρῆσόμεθα τῇ δυνάμει, οὐ τοὺς ἀνάγκη τῆς κακίας, ἀλλὰ τοὺς προαιρέσει ταύτης ἀπεχομένους στεφανοῦντος τοῦ Θεοῦ. Διὰ τοῦτο πολλῆς χρεία τῆς μηχανῆς, ἵνα πεισθῶσιν ἐκόντες ἑαυτοὺς ὑπέχειν ταῖς παρὰ τῶν ἱερέων θεραπαίαις οἱ κάμνοντες, καὶ οὐ τοῦτο μόνον, ἀλλ' ἵνα καὶ χάριν εἰδῶσι τῆς ἰατρείας αὐτοῖς.

[*God has committed to the priesthood greater power than to the angels. What they bind and loose on earth is bound and loosed in heaven. Also they can forgive and retain sins. What power is greater than this?*]

iii. 5.

Migne, P. G., XLVIII. 643.]

Καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔλαβον ἥν οὔτε ἀγγέλοις οὔτε ἀρχαγγέλοις ἔδωκεν ὁ Θεός. Οὐ γὰρ πρὸς ἐκείνους εἴρηται· Ὅσα ἂν δήσητε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ἔσται δεδεμένα καὶ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ὅσα ἂν λύσητε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται λελυμένα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ. Ἐχουσι μὲν γὰρ καὶ οἱ κρατοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς τὴν τοῦ δεσμεῖν ἐξουσίαν, ἀλλὰ σωμάτων μόνον· οὗτος δὲ ὁ δεσμὸς αὐτῆς ἄπτεται τῆς ψυχῆς, καὶ διαβαίνει τοὺς οὐρανούς· καὶ ἅπερ ἂν ἐργάσωνται κάτω οἱ ἱερεῖς, ταῦτα ὁ Θεὸς ἄνω κυροῖ, καὶ τὴν τῶν δούλων γνώμην ὁ Δεσπότης βεβαιοῖ. Καὶ τί γὰρ ἀλλ' ἢ πᾶσαν αὐτοῖς τὴν οὐράνιον ἔδωκεν ἐξουσίαν; Ὡν γὰρ ἂν, φησὶν,

**S. Chrysostom.**

ἀφῆτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας, ἀφέωνται, καὶ ὧν ἂν κρατῇτε, κεκράτηνται. Τίς ἂν γένοιτο ταύτης ἐξουσία μείζων; Πᾶσαν τὴν κρίσιν ἔδωκεν ὁ Πατὴρ τῷ Υἱῷ· ὁρῶ δὲ πᾶσαν αὐτὴν τούτους ἐγχειρεσθέντας ὑπὸ τοῦ Υἱοῦ.

[Our priests who treat not leprosy of the body, but uncleanness of the soul have received authority not merely to pronounce it removed, but to remove it altogether.]

iii. 6.

[Migne, P. G., XLVIII. 644.]

Λέπραν σώματος ἀπαλλάττειν, μᾶλλον δὲ ἀπαλλάττειν μὲν οὐδαμῶς, τοὺς δὲ ἀπαλλαγέοντας δοκιμάζειν μόνον εἶχον ἐξουσίαν οἱ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἱερεῖς, καὶ οἶσθα πῶς περιμάχτην ἦν τὸ τῶν ἱερέων τότε. Οὗτοι δὲ οὐ λέπραν σώματος, ἀλλ' ἀκαθαρσίαν ψυχῆς, οὐκ ἀπαλλαγεῖσαν δοκιμάζειν, ἀλλ' ἀπαλλάττειν παντελῶς ἔλαβον ἐξουσίαν.

[Priests help by prayers. They not only beget us anew (in Baptism) but have power to remit sins afterwards. S. James quoted.]

iii. 6.

[Migne, P. G., XLVIII. 644.]

Οὗτοι δὲ καὶ κάμνουσαν καὶ ἀπόλλυσθαι μέλλουσαν τὴν ψυχὴν πολλάκις ἔσωσαν, τοῖς μὲν πραοτέραν τὴν κόλασιν ἐργασάμενοι, τοὺς δὲ οὐδὲ παρὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀφέντες ἐμπεσεῖν, οὐ τῷ διδάσκειν μόνον καὶ νοουθετεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ δι' εὐχῶν βοηθεῖν. Οὐ γὰρ ὅταν ἡμᾶς ἀναγεννῶσι μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ μετὰ ταῦτα συγχωρεῖν ἔχουσιν ἐξουσίαν ἁμαρτήματα. Ἀσθενεῖ γὰρ τις, φησὶν, ἐν ὑμῖν; κ.τ.λ.

[I ask you to confess your sins to God: not in the theatre before your fellow-servants—that intolerable publication.]

*De incomprehensibili Dei natura.**Hom. v.*

[Migne, P. G., XLVIII. 746.]

Διὰ τοῦτο παρακαλῶ καὶ δέομαι καὶ ἀντιβολῶ ἐξομολογεῖσθαι τῷ Θεῷ συνεχῶς. Οὐδὲ γὰρ εἰς θέατρον σε ἄγω τῶν συνδούλων τῶν σῶν, οὐδὲ ἐκκαλύψαι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἀναγκάζω τὰ ἁμαρτήματα· τὸ συνειδὸς ἀνάπτυσσον ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ αὐτῷ δεῖξον τὰ τραύματα, καὶ παρ' αὐτοῦ τὰ φάρμακα αἴτησαι· δεῖξον τῷ μὴ ὀνειδίζοντι, ἀλλὰ θεραπεύοντι· καὶ γὰρ σὺ σιγῆσης, οἶδεν ἐκεῖνος ἅπαντα. Εἰπὲ τοίνυν, ἵνα κερδάνης· εἰπὲ, ἵνα ἐνταῦθα ἀποθέμενος πάντα τὰ ἁμαρτήματα, ἀπέλθῃς ἐκεῖ καθαρὸς καὶ ἔξω τῶν πλημμελημάτων, καὶ τῆς ἀφορήτου δημοσιεύσεως ἐκείνης ἀπαλλαγῇς.

[Five days real penitence enough to intercept a multitude of sins.]

*De beato Philogonio.*

4.

[Migne, P. G., XLVIII. 754.]

Καὶ μὴ μοι λεγέτω τις, αἰσχύνῃς γέμω, ἁμαρτημάτων ἔχω τὸ συνειδὸς



**S. Chrysostom.**

πεπληρωμένον, φορτίον ἐπιφέρομαι βαρύτατον· ἱκανὴ γὰρ τῶν πέντε ἡμερῶν τούτων ἢ προθεσμία, εἰν νήφης καὶ προσεύχῃ καὶ ἀγρυπνίῃ, τὸ πολὺ τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων ὑποτέμνεσθαι. Μὴ γάρ ὅτι βραχὺς ὁ χρόνος ἵδης, ἀλλ' ἐκείνο σκόπησον, ὅτι φιλάνθρωπος ὁ Δεσπότης.

[*Meet past offences by the contrary virtues. Lapse of days or years not needed: one day may be enough. God asks no more for the forgiveness of sins than an entire resolve to forsake them.*]

4. [Migne, P. G., XLVIII. 754.]

Δι' ὧν γὰρ ἐγοήτευσε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, διὰ τούτων τὰ φάρμακα τῆς μετανοίας κατεσκεύασε· δι' ὧν ἀνεπτέρωσε τὰς τῶν ἀκολάστων ὄψεις, διὰ τούτων ἐδάκρυσε διὰ τῶν πλοκάμων, δι' ὧν ὑπεσκέλισεν εἰς ἁμαρτίαν πολλοὺς, διὰ τούτων τοὺς πόδας ἀπέμαξε τοῦ Χριστοῦ διὰ τοῦ μύρου, δι' οὗ πολλοὺς ἐδελέασε διὰ τούτου τοὺς πόδας ἐκείνου ἤλειψε. Καὶ σὺ τοίνυν δι' ὧν παρώξυνας τὸν Θεόν, διὰ τούτων ἱλεων ποίησον πάλιν. . . .

Ταῦτα οὐχ ἡμερῶν δεῖται, οὐδὲ ἐνιαυτῶν πολλῶν, ἀλλὰ προαιρέσεως μόνης, καὶ ἐν μιᾷ κατορθοῦνται ἡμέρα. Ἀπόστηθι τῆς πονηρίας, ἐπιλαβοῦ τῆς ἀρετῆς, παῦσαι τῆς κακίας, καὶ ὑπόσχου μηκέτι ταῦτα ποιεῖν, καὶ ἀρκεῖ σοι τοῦτο εἰς ἀπολογία. Ἐγὼ διαμαρτύρομαι καὶ ἐγγυῶμαι, ὅτι τῶν ἁμαρτανύντων ἡμῶν ἕκαστος, ἂν ἀποστὰς τῶν προτέρων κακῶν ὑπόσχηται τῷ Θεῷ μετὰ ἀληθείας μηκέτι αὐτῶν ἄψασθαι, οὐδὲν ἕτερον ὁ Θεὸς ζητήσῃ πρὸς ἀπολογία μείζονα.

[*Kill thy sin by exomologesis and self-accusation to God: not to thy fellow-servant, or in the midst of the theatre.*]

*De Lazaro.*

*Hom. iv. 4.*

[Migne, P. G., XLVIII. 1012.]

Εἰ δὲ καὶ μέχρι τούτου ῥαθυμήσαιομεν, ἐξελθοῦσαν εἰς ἔργον τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἀποκτείνειν πάλιν δι' ἐξομολογήσεως καὶ δακρύων, διὰ τοῦ κατηγορεῖν ἑαυτῶν. Οὐδὲν γὰρ οὕτως ὀλέθριον τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, ὥς κατηγορία καὶ κατάγνωσις σὺν μετανοίᾳ καὶ δάκρυσι κατέγνωσ σου τὴν ἁμαρτίαν; ἀπέθου τὸ φορτίον. Καὶ τίς ταῦτά φησιν; Αὐτὸς ὁ δικάζων Θεός. Λέγε σὺ τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου πρῶτος, ἵνα δικαιωθῇς· τίς γὰρ ἕνεκεν αἰσχύνῃ καὶ ἐρυθριᾷ, εἰπέ μοι, τὰ ἁμαρτήματα εἰπεῖν; μὴ γὰρ ἀνθρώπῳ λέγεις, ἵνα ὀνειδίσῃ σε; μὴ γὰρ τῷ συνδούλῳ ὁμολογῇς, ἵνα ἐκπομπεύσῃ; τῷ Δεσπότη, τῷ κηδεμόνι, τῷ φιλάνθρωπῳ, τῷ ἱατρῷ τὸ τραῦμα ἐπιδεικνύεις.

Οὐκ ἀναγκάζω, φησὶν, εἰς μέσον ἔλθεῖν σε θέατρον καὶ μάρτυρας περιστῆσαι πολλούς· ἐμοὶ τὸ ἁμάρτημα εἰπεῖ μόνῳ κατ' ἰδίαν, ἵνα θεραπεύσω τὸ ἔλκος, καὶ ἀπαλλάξω τῆς ὀδύνης.

**S. Chrysostom.**

[*Flavian has received authority to loose sins committed against God. Much more can he blot out sins committed against a man.*]

*Ad Populum Antiochenum.*

*Hom. iii.*

[Migne, P. G., XLIX. 50.]

Εἰ γὰρ τὰς εἰς Θεὸν ἁμαρτίας λύειν ἔλαβεν ἐξουσίαν, πολλῶ μᾶλλον τὰς εἰς ἄνθρωπον γενομένας ἀνελεῖν καὶ ἀφανίσει δυνήσεται.

[*Charity to the sinner. Show thy wound to the priest.*]

*Hom. iii.*

[Migne, P. G., XLIX. 54.]

Δεῖξον ἀγάπην περὶ τὸν ἡμαρτηκότα· πείσον αὐτὸν ὅτι κηδόμενος καὶ φροντίζων, οὐκ ἐκπομπεύσαι βουλόμενος, περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας αὐτὸν ὑπομιμνήσκεις· κάτασχε πόδας, καταφίλησον, μὴ ἐπαισχυνθῆς, εἴ γε ἀληθῶς ἰατρεύσαι βούλει. Ταῦτα καὶ ἱατροὶ ποιοῦσι πολλάκις· δυσαρέστως γὰρ ἔχοντας τοὺς κάμνοντας καταφιλοῦντες· παρακαλοῦντες ἀναπείθουσι σωτήριον δέξασθαι φάρμακον· οὕτω καὶ σὺ ποιήσον· τῷ ἱερεῖ δεῖξον τὸ ἔλκος, τοῦτό ἐστι κηδομένου, τοῦτο προνοοῦντος, τοῦτο φροντίζοντος.

[*If on self-examination a person find that he has made no improvement in Lent, but only kept the fast, let him remain outside, and only come within when he has purged away his sins.*]

*Hom. xx.*

[Migne, P. G., XLIX. 197.]

Ἐκαστος τοίνυν ἀναλογιζέσθω παρ' ἑαυτῷ, ποῖον ἐλάττωμα διώρθωσε, ποῖον κατόρθωμα προσεκτήσατο, ποίαν ἁμαρτίαν ἀπεβάλετο ποίαν κηλῖδα ἀπενίψατο, κατὰ τί βελτίων ἐγένετο· κἂν μὲν εὖρη πλέον τι γενόμενον ἀπὸ τῆς νηστείας ἑαυτῷ πρὸς τὴν καλὴν ταύτην ἐμπορίαν, καὶ συνίδῃ πολλὴν ἑαυτῷ πεποιημένῳ τῶν τραυμάτων τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν, προσερχέσθω· εἰ δὲ ἡμελημένος ἔμεινε, νηστείαν μόνον ἔχων ἐπιδείξασθαι, τῶν δὲ ἄλλων οὐδὲν κατορθώκως, ἔξω μενέτω, καὶ τότε εἰσίτω, ὅταν ἅπαντα ἐκκαθάρῃ τὰ ἁμαρτήματα.

[*Five methods of μετάνοια: (1) self-accusation, (2) forgiveness of others, (3) prayer, (4) alms, (5) humility.*]

*De diabolo tentatore.*

*Hom. ii.*

[Migne, P. G., XLIX. 263.]

Βούλεσθε εἶπω καὶ μετανοίας ὁδοὺς; πολλαὶ τινές εἰσι καὶ ποικίλαι καὶ διάφοροι, καὶ πᾶσαι πρὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν φέρουσιν. Ἔστι πρώτη μετανοίας ὁδὸς ἁμαρτημάτων κατάγνωσις. Λέγε γὰρ σὺ πρῶτος τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου, ἵνα δικαιωθῇς· διὸ καὶ ὁ προφήτης ἔφη. Εἶπα· Ἐξαγορεύσω κατ' ἐμοῦ τὴν ἀνομίαν μου τῷ κυρίῳ, καὶ σὺ ἀφῆκας τὴν ἀσέβειαν τῆς καρδίας μου. Κατάγνωθι τοίνυν καὶ σὺ τῶν ἡμαρτημένων· ἀρκεῖ τοῦτο τῷ Δεσπότη πρὸς ἀπολογίαν· ὁ γὰρ καταγνοὺς τῶν ἡμαρτημένων, ὀκνηρότερος ἐστι πρὸς τὸ τοῖς αὐτοῖς πάλιν περιπεσεῖν. Κίνησον τὸν κατήγορον ἑνδον τὸ σὸν συνειδὸς, ἵνα μὴ ἐκεῖ κατήγορον ἔχῃς ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος τοῦ κυρίου. Μία



**S. Chrysostom.**

μὲν οὖν μετανοίας ὁδὸς ἀρίστη αὕτη· ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἑτέρα ταύτης οὐκ ἐλάττων, τὸ μὴ μνησικακεῖν τοῖς ἐχθροῖς, τὸ κρατεῖν ὀργῆς, τὸ ἀφιέναι τὰ συνδουλικά ἀμαρτήματα· οὕτω γὰρ ἡμῖν ἀφεθήσεται καὶ τὰ εἰς τὸν Δεσπότην γεγενημένα. ἰδοὺ καὶ δεύτερον ἀμαρτημάτων καθάρσιον. Ἐὰν γὰρ ἀφήτε, φησὶ, τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ὑμῶν, καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος ἀφήσει ὑμῖν. | Βούλει καὶ τρίτην μαθεῖν μετανοίας ὁδόν; Εὐχὴ ζέουσα καὶ ἀκριβὴς, καὶ ἀπὸ βαθυτάτης καρδίας τοῦτο ποιεῖν. Οὐκ εἶδες ἐκείνην τὴν χήραν πῶς τὸν ἀναίσχυντον δικαστὴν ἐπεσπάσατο; Σὺ δὲ ἡμερον ἔχεις Δεσπότην καὶ προσηνῆ καὶ φιλάνθρωπον· ἐκείνη κατ' ἐχθρῶν ἤτει, σὺ δὲ οὐ κατ' ἐχθρῶν αἰτεῖς, ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τῆς σεαυτοῦ σωτηρίας. | Εἰ δὲ καὶ τετάρτην θέλεις μαθεῖν, τὴν ἐλεημοσύνην ἐρῶ· πολλὴν γὰρ δύναμιν αὕτη ἔχει, καὶ ἄφατον· καὶ γὰρ τῷ Ναβουχοδονόσορ εἰς πᾶν εἶδος κακίας ἐλθόντι, καὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν ἐπελθόντι, φησὶν ὁ Δανιήλ. Βασιλεῦ, ἡ βουλή μου ἀρεσάτω σοι· τὰς ἀμαρτίας σου ἐν ἐλεημοσύναις λύτρωσαι καὶ τὰς ἀνομίας σου ἐν οἰκτιρμοῖς πενήτων. Τί γένοιτο ταύτης ἴσον τῆς φιλανθρωπίας; Μετὰ μυρία ἀμαρτήματα, μετὰ τοσαύτας παρανομίας ἐπαγγέλλεται καταλλάττεσθαι τῷ προσκεκροκῶτι, εἰ τοῖς συνδούλοις φιλανθρωπεύσεται τοῖς αὐτοῦ, | καὶ τὸ μετριάζειν δὲ καὶ ταπεινοφρονεῖν τῶν εἰρημένων ἀπάντων οὐχ ἥττον δαπανᾷ ἀμαρτημάτων φύσιν· καὶ μάρτυς ὁ τελώνης, κατορθώματα μὲν οὐκ ἔχων εἰπεῖν, ἀντὶ δὲ πάντων τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην προσφέρων, καὶ τὸ βαρὺ τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων ἀποτιθέμενος φορτίον. | Ἰδοὺ πέντε μετανοίας ὁδοὺς ἐδείξαμεν, πρώτην τὴν κατάγνωσιν τῶν ἡμαρτημένων, δευτέραν τὸ ἀφεῖναι τοῖς πλησίον τὰ ἀμαρτήματα, τρίτην τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς εὐχῆς γιγνομένην, τετάρτην τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐλεημοσύνης, πέμπτην τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς ταπεινοφροσύνης.

[*Penitence rescues from the devil the harlot, the publican, the thief, the blasphemer.*]

*De Pœnitentia.*

*Hom. ii.*

[*Migne, P. G., XLIX. 284.*]

Τί δέδοικας, ὦ διάβολε, μετανοίας ἐγκωμιαζομένης; τί ὁδύρῃ, τί φρίττεις; Ναὶ, φησὶ, δικαίως ὁδύρομαι καὶ θλίβομαι· μεγάλα μου σκευὴ ἤρπασεν ἡ μετάνοια αὕτη. Ποῖα ταῦτα; Τὴν πόρνην, τὸν τελώνην, τὸν ληστήν, τὸν βλάσφημον.

[*Enter the church even daily, if a sinner to say thy sins, if a just man that thou mayest not fall.*]

*Hom. ii.*

[*Migne, P. G., XLIX. 285.*]

Τίνος οὖν ἔνεκεν ὁμιλίας τοιαύτης οὐκ ἀπολαύομεν, καὶ ἐφ' ἐκάστης εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἀπαντῶμεν, τὴν μετάνοιαν ἀσπαζόμενοι; καὶ ἀμαρτωλὸς ᾗς, εἰσελθε εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, ἵνα λέγῃς τὰς ἀμαρτίας σου· καὶ δίκαιος ᾗς, εἰσελθε, ἵνα μὴ ἐκπέσῃς τῆς δικαιοσύνης· λιμὴν γὰρ ἀμφοτέροις ἐστὶν ἡ ἐκκλησία.

**S. Chrysostom.**

[*Let the sinner enter the church, and say to God, "I have sinned."*]

Hom. ii.

[Migne, P. G., XLIX. 285.]

Ἀμαρτωλὸς εἶ; μὴ ἀπογνῶς, ἀλλ' εἴσελθε μετάνοιαν προβαλλόμενος. Ἡμαρτες; εἰπὲ τῷ Θεῷ ὅτι, Ἠμάρτηκα ποῖος κάματος οὗτος; ποία περίοδος; ποία θλίψις; ποία στενοχωρία λόγον εἰπεῖν ὅτι, Ἡμαρτον; Μὴ γὰρ σὺ, σταντὸν ἔαν μὴ εἰπῇς ἀμαρτωλὸν, οὐκ ἔχεις κατήγορον τὸν διάβολον; Πρόλαβε, καὶ ἄρπασον αὐτοῦ τὸ ἀξίωμα· ἐκείνου γὰρ ἀξίωμα τὸ κατηγορεῖν. Τί οὖν οὐ προλαμβάνεις αὐτὸν, καὶ λέγεις τὴν ἀμαρτίαν, καὶ ἐξαλείφεις τὸ ἀμάρτημα, εἰδὼς ὅτι τοιοῦτον κατήγορον ἔχεις σιγῇσαι μὴ δυνάμενον; Ἡμαρτες; εἴσελθε εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, εἰπὲ τῷ Θεῷ ὅτι Ἡμαρτον.

[*The second mode of μετάνοια: Contrition.*]

Hom. ii.

[Migne, P. G., XLIX. 287.]

Ἔχεις δὲ μετανοίας ὁδὸν καὶ ἑτέραν· ποίαν δὴ ταύτην; Τὸ πενθῆσαι τὴν ἀμαρτίαν. Ἡμαρτες; πένθησον, καὶ λύεις τὴν ἀμαρτίαν.

[*The third mode: Humility.*]

Hom. ii.

[Migne, P. G., XLIX. 289.]

Ἔχεις δὲ καὶ τρίτην ὁδὸν μετανοίας. Πολλὰς δὲ ὁδοὺς μετανοίας εἶπον, ἵνα τῇ ποικιλίᾳ τῶν ὁδῶν εὐκόλῳ σοι τὴν σωτηρίαν ἐργάσωμαι. Ποία δὲ αὕτη ἡ τρίτη ὁδός; Ἡ ταπεινοφροσύνη· ταπεινοφρόνησον, καὶ ἔλυσας τὰς σειρὰς τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν.

[*The modes of penance are alternative. If a man cannot fulfil one, he may another. (1) Enter the church, say "I have sinned," and thou hast loosed the sin. (2) Contrition. (3) Humility.*]

Hom. iii.

[Migne, P. G., XLIX. 292.]

Περὶ μετανοίας τὸν λόγον ἐγυμνάζομεν πρῶην καὶ ἐλέγομεν, ὅτι πολλὰ καὶ ποικίλαι ὁδοὶ τῆς μετανοίας ἵνα εὐκόλος ἡμῖν γένηται ἡ σωτηρία. Εἰ γὰρ μίαν ἡμῖν ἔδωκεν ὁδὸν ὁ Θεὸς μετανοίας, ἀνεβαλόμεθα ἂν λέγοντες· Οὐ δυνάμεθα ταύτην μετελθεῖν, σωθῆναι οὐ δυνάμεθα· νῦν δὲ ἐκκόπτων σου τὴν πρόφασιν ταύτην, οὐ μίαν σοι δέδωκε μόνον ὁδὸν, οὐδὲ δευτέραν, οὐδὲ τρίτην, ἀλλὰ πολλὰς καὶ διαφόρους, ἵνα τῷ πλήθει εὐκόλον σοι ποιήσῃ τὴν ἀνάβασιν τὴν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν. Καὶ ἐλέγομεν ὅτι εὐκόλος ἡ μετάνοια, καὶ οὐδὲν βάρος ἐν αὐτῇ. Ἀμαρτωλὸς εἶ; εἴσελθε εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, εἰπὲ ὅτι Ἠμάρτηκα, καὶ ἔλυσας τὴν ἀμαρτίαν. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ τὸν Δαυὶδ παρηγάγομεν εἰς μέσον ἀμαρτήσαντα, καὶ λύσαντα τὴν ἀμαρτίαν· εἴτα δευτέραν ὁδὸν ὑπεθέμεθα, τὸ πενθῆσαι ἐπὶ τῇ ἀμαρτίᾳ, καὶ ἐλέγομεν, ποῖος κάματος οὗτος; . . . Εἴτα καὶ τρίτην ὁδὸν ἐδιδόαμεν μετανοίας, καὶ παρηγάγομεν ἐκ τῆς Γραφῆς εἰς τὸ μέσον τὸν Φαρισαῖον καὶ τὸν τελώνην . . .



**S. Chrysostom.**[*The fourth mode of μετάνοια : Almsgiving.*]

Hom. iii.

[Migne, P. G., XLIX. 293.]

Φέρε οὖν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀκολουθίαν ἔλθωμεν, καὶ τετάρτον ὁδὸν μετανοίας προάξωμεν· ποίαν δὲ ταύτην; Λέγω δὴ τὴν ἐλεημοσύνην τὴν βασιλίδα τῶν ἀρετῶν, τὴν ταχέως ἀνάγωσαν εἰς τὰς ἀψίδας τῶν οὐρανῶν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, τὴν συνήγορον τὴν ἀρίστην. Μέγα πρᾶγμα ἐλεημοσυνή.

[*The population of Antioch reaches 200,000.*]

In S. Ignatium Martyrem.

[Migne, P. G., L. 591.]

Ἐπίπονον μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἑκατὸν ἀνδρῶν καὶ πεντήκοντα προστῆναι μόνον· τὸ δὲ πόλιν ἐγχειρισθῆναι τοσαύτην καὶ δῆμον εἰς εἴκοσιν ἐκτεινόμενον μυριάδας, πόσης ἀρετῆς οἶει καὶ σοφίας ἀπόδειξιν εἶναι.

[*Μετάνοια beyond the grave is of no service.*]

Non esse ad gratiam concionandum.

[Migne, P. G., L. 657.]

Τί οὖν; ἀπώνατό τι τῆς μετανοίας; ἐγένετό τι κέρδος αὐτῷ ἀπὸ τῆς κατανύξεως; οὐδαμῶς· ἄκαιρος γὰρ ἡ μετάνοια. Ἐλύθη τὸ θέατρον, ἀπῆλθε τὰ σκάμματα, οὐκ ἔτι καιρὸς τῶν παλαισμάτων ἦν· διὰ τοῦτο παρακαλῶ, καὶ δέομαι καὶ αντιβολῶ, ἐνταῦθα ὁδύρεσθαι χρὴ καὶ θρηνεῖν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἁμαρτήμασι.

[*Sin after Baptism is graver than if it were before Baptism, but the doors of μετάνοια are open, and such sins may be washed away in various ways.*]

In Joannem.

Hom. xxviii.

[Migne, P. G., LIX. 161.]

Τί οὖν, φησὶν, ἂν ἐκ πρώτης ἡλικίας μυστηριῶν καταξιωθεῖς τις μετὰ ταῦτα μυρία ἁμάρτη; ὁ τοιοῦτος λοιπὸν μείζονος κολάσεως ἄξιος. Τῶν γὰρ αὐτῶν ἁμαρτημάτων οὐ τὰς αὐτὰς τίννυμεν δίκας, ἀλλὰ πολλῷ χαλεπωτέρας, ὅταν μετὰ μυσταγωγίαν πλημμελήσωμεν. . . . Πλὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ τούτῳ μετανοίας ἀνέφεξε θύρας καὶ πολλοῖς τρόποις ἔδωκεν ἀπονύφασθαι τὰ πεπλημμελημένα, ἂν ἐθέλῃ. Ἐννόησον οὖν ἡλίκα ταῦτα φιλανθρωπίας δείγματα, τὸ καὶ χάριτι ἀφεῖναι, καὶ μετὰ τὴν χάριν τὸν ἁμαρτόντα καὶ ἄξιον ὄντα κολάσεως μὴ κολάζειν, ἀλλὰ διδόναι καιρὸν καὶ προθεσμίαν ἀπολογίας αὐτῷ.

[*Contrition is exomologesis and penance.*]

In Epistolam ii. ad Corinthios.

Hom. iv.

[Migne, P. G., LXI. 426.]

Καρδίαν γὰρ συντετριμμένην καὶ τεταπεινωμένην εἶχεν, ὃ μάλιστα αὐτοῦ τὰ ἁμαρτήματα ἀπέσμηχε· καὶ γὰρ τοῦτο ἐξομολόγησις, τοῦτο μετάνοια.

## S. Chrysostom.

[*Contrition is exomologesis.*]

Hom. iv.

[Migne, P. G., LXI. 426.]

Στέναξον ὅταν ἁμάρτης, μὴ ὅτι κολάζεσθαι μέλλεις· τοῦτο γὰρ οὐδέν· ἀλλ' ὅτι προσέκρουσάς σου τῷ Δεσπότη τῷ οὕτως ἡμέρῳ, τῷ οὕτω σε φιλοῦντι καὶ ἐκκρεμαμένῳ τῆς σωτηρίας τῆς σῆς, ὥς καὶ τὸν Υἱὸν ἐπιδοῦναι ὑπὲρ σοῦ. Διὰ ταῦτα στέναξον, καὶ τοῦτο ποίει διηνεκῶς· τοῦτο γὰρ ἐξομολόγησις.

[*A list of healing medicaments.*]

Hom. iv.

[Migne, P. G., LXI. 427.]

Ἀρίθμει τοίνυν τὰ φάρμακα τὰ ἰώμενά σου τὰ τραύματα, καὶ πάντα ἐπιτίθει συνεχῶς, ταπεινοφροσύνην, ἐξομολόγησιν, τὸ μὴ μνησικακεῖν, τὸ πάσχοντα κακῶς εὐχαριστεῖν, τὸ ἐλεεῖν διὰ χρημάτων, διὰ πραγμάτων, τὸ εὐχεσθαι καρτερικῶς.

[*Prayers used in the Liturgy for those in penitence.*]

Hom. xviii.

[Migne, P. G., LXI. 527.]

Καὶ ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς δὲ πολὺ τὸν λαὸν ἴδοι τις ἂν συνεισφέροντα. Καὶ γὰρ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐνεργουμένων, ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐν μετανοίᾳ, κοιναὶ καὶ παρὰ τοῦ ἱερέως καὶ παρ' αὐτῶν γίνονται αἱ εὐχαί, καὶ πάντες μίαν λέγουσιν εὐχὴν, εὐχὴν τὴν ἐλέου γέμουσαν.

[*Enumeration of the remedies of μετάνοια :—*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Condemnation and accusation of the fault. | 6. Conversion of the brethren.                    |
| 2. Humility (with confession).               | 7. Recourse without reserve to the priests.       |
| 3. Prayer.                                   | 8. Caring for the oppressed.                      |
| 4. Almsgiving.                               | 9. Avoidance of anger and meekness of endurance.] |
| 5. Forgiveness of others.                    |   |

In Epistolam ad Hebræos.

Hom. ix. 6.

[Migne, P. G., LXIII. 80.]

Πάλιν ἐξεπέσομεν, καὶ οὐδὲ οὕτω κολάζει, ἀλλ' ἔδωκε τὸ τῆς μετανοίας φάρμακον, πάντα ἡμῶν τὰ ἁμαρτήματα ἱκανὸν ἀφανίσαι καὶ ἀπαλεῖψαι, μόνον ἔαν εἰδῶμεν τὸ φάρμακον ὅποιον ἐστι, καὶ πῶς αὐτὸ ἐπιτιθέναι δεῖ. Ποῖον οὖν ἐστι τὸ φάρμακον τῆς μετανοίας. Καὶ πῶς αὐτὸ κατασκευάζεται.

Πρῶτον ἀπο καταγνώσεως τῶν οἰκείων ἁμαρτημάτων καὶ ἀπὸ ἐξαγορεύσεως. . . .

Δεύτερον, ἀπὸ ταπεινοφροσύνης πολλῆς. . . . Ἐὰν γὰρ ὁμολογήσης τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ὥς ὁμολογήσαι χρὴ, ταπεινοῦται ἡ ψυχὴ.

Μετὰ δὲ τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην, εὐχῶν δεῖ ἐκτενῶν, δακρύων πολλῶν, τῶν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ, τῶν ἐν νυκτί.



**S. Chrysostom.**

Καὶ μετὰ τὴν εὐχὴν τὴν οὕτως ἐκτενῇ, ἐλεημοσύνης δεῖ πολλῆς. Τὸ γὰρ μάλιστα ἰσχυρὸν ἐργαζόμενον τὸ φάρμακον τῆς μετανοίας, τοῦτό ἐστι.

Εἶτα τὸ μὴ ὀργίζεσθαι, μηδὲ μνησικακεῖν, τὸ πᾶσιν ἀφιέναι τὰ ἁμαρτήματα.

Καὶ τὸ ἐπιστρέφειν ἀδελφούς ἀπὸ τῆς πλάνης τὸ πρὸς τοὺς ἱερεῖς ἔχειν οἰκείως. Κὰν γὰρ ἁμαρτίας ἢ φησι, πεποιηκώς τις, ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ.

τὸ προϊστασθαι τῶν ἀδικοομένων, τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ὀργὴν, τὸ πάντα πράως φέρειν.

[*A μετάνοια is open, but not a second Baptism.*]

Hom. ix. 6.

[Migne, P. G., LXIII. 80.]

Τί οὖν; οὐκ ἔστι μετάνοια, φησὶν; Ἔστι μετάνοια ἀλλὰ βάπτισμα οὐκ ἔστι δεύτερον. Μετάνοια δὲ ἔστι πολλὴν ἔχουσα τὴν ἰσχὺν, καὶ τὸν σφόδρα τοῖς ἁμαρτήμασι βεβαπτισμένον, εἰ βουληθείη, δυναμένη ἀπαλλάξαι τοῦ τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων φορτίου, καὶ τὸν κινδυνεύοντα καταστήσαι ἐν ἀσφαλείᾳ, κὰν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἔλθῃ τῆς κακίας τὸν πυθμένα. Καὶ τοῦτο πολλαχόθεν δυνατόν ἀποδείξαι. Μὴ ὁ πίπτων γὰρ, φησὶν, οὐκ ἀνίσταται, ἢ ὁ ἀποστρέφων οὐκ ἐπιστρέφει; Ἔστιν, ἐὰν βουλώμεθα, μορφωθῆναι τὸν Χριστὸν ἐν ἡμῖν πάλιν· ἄκουε γὰρ Παύλου λέγοντος, Τεκνία μου, οὓς πάλιν ὠδίνω, ἄχρισ οὐ μορφωθῇ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν· μόνον ἀψώμεθα τῆς μετανοίας. Ὅρα γὰρ Θεοῦ φιланθρωπῖαν· ἔδει ἡμᾶς παντὶ τρόπῳ κολασθῆναι παρὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν, ὅτι καὶ νόμον λαβόντες τὸν φυσικὸν καὶ μυρίων ἀπολαύσαντες ἀγαθῶν, τὸν τε Δεσπότην ἡγνοήκαμεν, καὶ βίον ἀκάθαρτον βεβιώκαμεν· ὁ δὲ οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἐκόλασεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ μυρίων μετέδωκεν ἀγαθῶν, ὥς ἂν εἰ μεγάλα κατωρθωκότες ἦμεν.

[*Confession necessary for forgiveness of sins. Not a public exhibition, or an accusation of yourself to others, but a confession to God the Judge.*]

Hom. xxxi.

[Migne, P. G., LXIII. 216.]

Πῶς ἀξιοῖς συγγνώμης τυχεῖν, εἰπέ μοι, ἐπὶ τοῖς ἁμαρτήμασι, μηδέπω ταῦτα ὁμολογήσας; Πάντως ἐκείνός ἐστιν ἐλέους καὶ φιλανθρωπίας ἄξιος ὁ ἡμαρτηκώς· σὺ δὲ μηδέπω πείσας σαυτὸν ἡμαρτηκέναι, πῶς ἀξιοῖς ἐλεηθῆναι ἐπὶ τοῖς πλημμελήμασιν οὕτως ἀναισχυντῶν; Πείθωμεν ἑαυτοὺς ὅτι ἡμάρτομεν· μὴ τῇ γλώττῃ λέγωμεν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῇ διανοίᾳ· μὴ ἁμαρτωλοὺς καλῶμεν ἑαυτοὺς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἁμαρτήματα ἀναλογιζώμεθα, κατ' εἶδος ἕκαστον ἀναλέγοντες. Οὐ λέγω σοι, Ἐκπόμπευσον σαυτὸν, οὐδὲ παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις κατηγορήσον, ἀλλὰ πείθεσθαι συμβουλεύω τῷ προφῆτῃ λέγοντι. Ἀποκάλυψον πρὸς Κύριον τὴν ὁδόν σου. Ἐπὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ ταῦτα ὁμολογήσον, ἐπὶ τοῦ δικαστοῦ ὁμολόγει τὰ ἁμαρτήματα, εὐχόμενος, εἰ καὶ μὴ τῇ γλώττῃ, ἀλλὰ τῇ μνήμῃ. Καὶ οὕτως ἀξίου ἐλεηθῆναι.

**S. Chrysostom.**

[*Exomologesis of sins, full and accurate, to be part of the discipline, with prayer and good works, by which we should prepare for Easter, the day of the Lord.*]

*In Genesin.*

*Hom. xxx.*

[Migne, P. G., LIII. 273.]

Καθάπερ οὖν κυβερνῆται καὶ δρομεῖς καὶ ἀθληταὶ, τότε μᾶλλον τούτων ἕκαστος τὴν σπουδὴν ἐπιτείνει καὶ τὴν ἀγρυπνίαν, ὅταν πρὸς τῷ τέλει γένωνται· τὸν αὐτὸν δὴ τρόπον καὶ ἡμᾶς προσήκει, ἐπειδὴ εἰς τὴν μεγάλην ταύτην ἐβδομάδα ἐφθάσαμεν τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ χάριτι, νῦν μάλιστα καὶ τῆς νηστείας τὸν δρόμον ἐπιτείνειν, καὶ τὰς εὐχὰς εὐτονωτέρας ποιεῖσθαι, καὶ πολλὴν καὶ ἀκριβῆ τὴν ἐξομολόγησιν τῶν ἡμαρτημένων ἐπιδείξασθαι, καὶ τὴν περὶ τὰς ἀγαθὰς πράξεις ἐργασίαν, ἐλεημοσύνην δαψιλῇ, ἐπιείκειαν, πραότητα, τὴν ἄλλην ἅπασαν ἀρετὴν, ἵνα μετὰ τούτων τῶν κατορθωμάτων εἰς τὴν κυρίαν φθάσαντες ἡμέραν τῆς παρὰ τοῦ Δεσπότου φιλοτιμίας ἀπολαύσωμεν.

[*The devil seeks to prevent the showing of our wounds to the physician and the obtaining a healing.*]

*Hom. xxx.*

[Migne, P. G., LIII. 280.]

Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ οἶδεν ὅτι κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν ἐκείνον δυνάμεθα περὶ τῶν συνεχόντων ἡμᾶς διαλεχθέντες καὶ τὰ ἡμαρτημένα ἐξαγορεύσαντες, καὶ τὰ τραύματα τῷ ἱατρῷ δείξαντες, πολλῆς ἐπιτυχεῖν τῆς θεραπείας, τότε μάλιστα ἐφίσταται καὶ πάντα ποιεῖ καὶ πραγματεύεται, ὥστε ἐκκροῦσαι ἡμᾶς καὶ εἰς ῥαθυμίαν ἐμβαλεῖν.

[*The difference between the submission of those who accept expulsion from the Church, and the shamelessness of those who refuse to obey the priests. The insubordination is worse than the original offence.*]

*De Davide et Saule.*

*Hom. iii.*

[Migne, P. G., LIII. 695.]

Ἐκεῖνοι μὲν γὰρ οἱ κατὰ τοὺς τοῦ Θεοῦ νόμους ἐκβληθέντες καὶ μένοντες ἔξω, τέως χρηστὰς ἔχουσι τὰς ἐλπίδας· κἂν γὰρ ἐθέλωσι διορθώσασθαι τὰ παραπτώματα, δι' ἃ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐξέπεσον, δυνήσονται μετὰ καθαροῦ συνειδότος πάλιν ἐπανελθεῖν. Οἱ δὲ μολύναντες ἑαυτοὺς, καὶ κελευσθέντες μὴ πρότερον ἐπιβῆναι, ἕως ἂν ἀποκαθάρωνται τὴν κηλῖδα τὴν ἐκ τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων, εἶτα ἀναισχυτοῦντες, χαλεπώτερον τὸ τραῦμα ἐργάζονται, καὶ μείζον τὸ ἔλκος. Οὐ γὰρ οὕτω τὸ ἁμαρτάνειν ἐστὶ χαλεπὸν, ὥς ἡ μετὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἀναισχυντία, καὶ τὸ μὴ πείθεσθαι τοῖς ἱερεῦσι τὰ τοιαῦτα κελεύουσι.



**S. Chrysostom.**

[*Exomologesis suitable alike to the unbaptized and to the penitent faithful.*]

*In Matthæum.*

*Hom. x. 5.*

[*Migne, P. G., LVII. 190.*]

Τούτον δὴ καὶ ἡμεῖς ζηλώσωμεν, καὶ τὰς τρυφὰς καὶ τὴν μέθην ἀφέντες, ἐπὶ τὸν κατεσταλμένον μεταθώμεθα βίον. Καὶ γὰρ ἐξομολογήσεως ὁ καιρὸς καὶ τοῖς ἀμνητοῖς καὶ τοῖς βαπτισθεῖσι· τοῖς μὲν, ἵνα μετανοήσαντες τῶν ἱερῶν τύχῳσι μυστηρίων, τοῖς δὲ, ἵνα ἀπονιψάμενοι τὴν μετὰ τὸ βάπτισμα κηλίδα, καθαρῶ συνειδότε τῇ τραπέζῃ προσέλθωσιν. Ἀποστῶμεν τοίνυν τοῦ ὑγροῦ τούτου καὶ διαλελυμένου βίου. Οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν, οὐκ ἔστιν ὁμοῦ καὶ ἐξομολογεῖσθαι καὶ τρυφᾶν. Καὶ ταῦτα διδασκέτω ὑμᾶς Ἰωάννης, ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐνδύματος, ἀπὸ τῆς τροφῆς, ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκίας. Τί οὖν; οὕτω κελεύεις ἡμᾶς κατεστάλθαι; φησὶν. Οὐ κελεύω, ἀλλὰ συμβουλεύω καὶ παραινῶ. Εἰ δὲ μὴ δυνατόν ὑμῖν τοῦτο, καὶ ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν ὄντες ἐπιδειξώμεθα τὴν μετάνοιαν· καὶ γὰρ ἐπὶ θύραις τὸ δικαστήριον.

[*Metanoia should cover not merely the forsaking of sin, but the practice of acts of the contrary virtue.*]

*Hom. x. 6.*

[*Migne, P. G., LVII. 190.*]

Διὰ τοῦτο πολλῆς ἡμῖν δεῖ τῆς ἐξομολογήσεως καὶ πολλῶν τῶν δακρῶν, καὶ ὅτι ἀναλγήτως διακείμεθα πλημμελοῦντες, καὶ ὅτι μεγάλα τὰ ἁμαρτήματα καὶ συγγνώμης μείζονα. Καὶ ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι, μάρτυρες οἱ πλείους τῶν ἀκουόντων. Ἄλλ' ὅμως εἰ καὶ συγγνώμης μείζονα, μετανοήσωμεν, καὶ στεφάνων ἀπολαυσόμεθα. Μετάνοιαν δὲ λέγω, οὐ τὸ τῶν προτέρων ἀποστῆναι κακῶν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ μείζονα ἐπιδείξασθαι καλά. Ποιήσατε γὰρ, φησὶ, καρποὺς ἀξίους τῆς μετανοίας. Πῶς δὲ ποιήσομεν; Ἄν τὰ ἐναντία πράττωμεν· οἷόν τι λέγω ἤρπασας τὰ ἀλλότρια; Δὸς καὶ τὰ σὰ λοιπόν. Πολὺν ἐπόρνευσας χρόνον; Ἀπόσχου καὶ τῆς γυναικὸς τῆς σῆς ὠρισμένης ἡμέρας· ἐγκράτειαν ἄσκησον. Ὑβρισας καὶ ἐτύπτησας παριόντας; Εὐλόγει λοιπὸν τοὺς ὑβρίζοντας, καὶ εὐεργέτει τοὺς πλῆττοντας. Οὐ γὰρ ἀρκεῖ εἰς ὑγίαν ἡμῖν τὸ βέλος ἐξελεῖν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ τραύματι φάρμακα ἐπιθεῖναι. Ἐτρύφησας καὶ ἐμεθύσθης τὸν ἔμπροσθεν χρόνον; Νήστευε καὶ ὑδροποσία πρόσεχε, ἵνα τὴν ἐκείθεν ἐγγενομένην λύμην ἀνέλῃς. Εἶδες ἀκολάστοις ὀφθαλμοῖς κάλλος ἀλλότριον; Μηδὲ ὅλως ἰδῆς γυναικὰ λοιπὸν, ἵν' ἐπὶ πλείονι καταστῇς ἀσφαλείᾳ.

[*He will forbid persistent swearers entrance within the sacred vestibule, and exclude them from communion like fornicators, adulterers, and the blood-guilty.*]

*Hom. xvii.*

[*Migne, P. G., LVII. 264.*]

Κὰν ἐπιμένοντας ἴδω, ἀπαγορεύσω λοιπὸν ὑμῖν τῶν ἱερῶν τούτων ἐπιβῆναι προθύρων, καὶ τῶν ἀθανάτων μετασχεῖν μυστηρίων, ὥσπερ τοῖς πορνεύουσι καὶ μοιχεύουσι καὶ ἐπὶ φόνοις ἐγκαλουμένοις.

**S. Chrysostom.**

[*The Lord's Prayer, the use of which is proper to the faithful, indicates that μετάνοια is open after Baptism.*]

Hom. xix.

[Migne, P. G., LVII. 280.]

Ὅτι γὰρ πιστοῖς αὕτη ἡ προσευχή προσήκει, καὶ οἱ νόμοι τῆς ἐκκλησίας διδάσκουσι, καὶ τὸ προοίμιον τῆς εὐχῆς. Ὁ γὰρ ἀμύητος οὐκ ἂν δύναιτο πατέρα καλεῖν τὸν Θεόν. Εἰ τοίνυν πιστοῖς προσήκει ἡ εὐχή, εὐχονται δὲ οὗτοι ἁμαρτήματα ἑαυτοῖς ἀφεθῆναι δεόμενοι, δῆλον ὅτι οὐδὲ μετὰ τὸ λουτρὸν ἀνῆρηται τῆς μετανοίας τὸ κέρδος. Εἰ γὰρ μὴ τοῦτο ἐβούλετο δεῖξαι, οὐδ' ἂν τοῦτο ἐνομοθέτησεν εὐχεσθαι. Ὁ δὲ καὶ ἁμαρτημάτων ἀναμιμνήσκων, καὶ κελεύων αἰτεῖν ἄφεσιν, καὶ διδάσκων ὅπως ἂν ἐπιτύχωμεν τῆς ἀφέσεως, καὶ εὐκολον ταύτῃ ποιῶν τὴν ὁδὸν, εὐδελον ὅτι εἰδὼς καὶ δεικνὺς ὅτι καὶ μετὰ τὸ λουτρὸν ἐστὶν ἀπονίψασθαι τὰ πεπλημμελημένα, τοῦτον τῆς ἱκετηρίας τὸν νόμον εἰσήνεγκε.

[*Prayers used in the Liturgy for those in penitence.*]

Hom. lxxi. 5.

[Migne, P. G., LVIII. 666.]

Καὶ ἡ πρώτη δὲ δέησις ἐλέους γέμει ὅταν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐνεργουμένων παρακαλῶμεν· καὶ ἡ δευτέρα πάλιν, ὑπὲρ ἐτέρων τῶν ἐν μετανοίᾳ, πολὺ τὸ ἔλεος ἐπιζητοῦσα· καὶ ἡ τρίτη δὲ πάλιν, ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν. . . .

[*The clergy who administer the Eucharist are to withhold it from he unfit.*]

Hom. lxxxii. 6.

[Migne, P. G., LVIII. 744.]

Ταῦτα πρὸς ὑμᾶς τοὺς μεταλαμβάνοντας λέγω, καὶ πρὸς ὑμᾶς τοὺς ἰδιακονουμένους. Καὶ γὰρ ἀναγκαῖον καὶ πρὸς ὑμᾶς διαλεχθῆναι, ὥστε μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς σπουδῆς διανέμειν ταυτὶ τὰ δῶρα. Οὐ μικρὰ κόλασις ὑμῖν ἐστίν, εἴ τιμι συνειδότες τινὰ πονηρίαν, συγχωρήσητε μετασχεῖν ταύτης τῆς τραπέζης· Τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν ἐκζητηθήσεται τῶν ὑμετέρων. Κἂν στρατηγός τις ᾗ, κἂν ὑπαρχος, κἂν αὐτὸς ὁ τὸ διάδημα περικείμενος, ἀναξίως δὲ προσίη, κώλυσον· μείζονα ἐκείνου τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἔχεις.

[*A hundred thousand assemble in the Christian gatherings of Antioch.*]

Hom. lxxxv.

[Migne, P. G., LVIII. 762.]

Καὶ γὰρ τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ χάριτι εἰς δέκα μυριάδων ἀριθμὸν οἶμαι τοὺς ἐνταῦθα συναγομένους τελεῖν· καὶ εἰ ἐνὸς ἄρτου μετεδίδου τινὶ τῶν πενήτων ἕκαστος, ἅπαντες ἦσαν ἂν ἐν εὐπορίᾳ· εἰ ἐξ ἐνὸς ὀβολοῦ μόνον, οὐδεὶς ἂν ᾗ πένης.

[*Reproof of the practice of non-communicating attendance. Not to communicate should imply that the person is a penitent.*]

*In Epistolam ad Ephesios.*

Hom. iii. 4.

[Migne, P. G., LXII. 29.]

Πολλὴν ὀρῶ τοῦ πράγματος τὴν ἀνωμαλίαν. Ἐν μὲν τοῖς ἄλλοις καιροῖς οὐδὲ καθαροὶ πολλάκις ὄντες προσέρχεσθε, ἐν δὲ τῷ Πάσχα, κἂν ᾗ τι



**S. Chrysostom.**

τετολμηνένον ὑμῖν, πρόσσιτε. ὦ τῆς συνηθείας! ὦ τῆς προλήψεως! εἰκὴ θυσία καθημερινή, εἰκὴ παρεστήκαμεν τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ, οὐδεὶς ὁ μετέχων. Ταῦτα οὐχ ἵνα ἀπλῶς μετέχητε, λέγω, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἀξίους ἑαυτοὺς κατασκευάζητε. Οὐκ εἴ τῆς θυσίας ἄξιος, οὐδὲ τῆς μεταλήψεως; οὐκοῦν οὐδὲ τῆς εὐχῆς. Ἀκούεις ἐστῶτος τοῦ κήρυκος, καὶ λέγοντος. Ὅσοι ἐν μετανοίᾳ, ἀπέλθετε πάντες. Ὅσοι μὴ μετέχουσιν, ἐν μετανοίᾳ εἰσίν. Εἰ τῶν ἐν μετανοίᾳ εἰ, μετασχεῖν οὐκ ὀφείλεις· ὁ γὰρ μὴ μετέχων, τῶν ἐν μετανοίᾳ ἐστί. Τίνος οὖν ἕνεκεν λέγει, Ἀπέλθετε, οἱ μὴ δυνάμενοι δεηθῆναι, σὺ δὲ ἕστηκας ἰταμῶς; Ἀλλ' οὐκ εἰ τούτων, ἀλλὰ τῶν δυναμένων μετέχειν, καὶ οὐδὲν φροντίζεις; οὐδὲν ἡγῇ τὸ πρᾶγμα.

[*Grave offenders invited to come to the church and be healed.*]

*Homilia, Quod frequenter conveniendum sit, etc.*

[Migne, P. G., LXIII. 462.]

Εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἔλεγον, Ὁ πλεονεκτῶν, ὁ ἀρπάζων, ὁ πορνεύων, ὁ μοιχεύων, μὴ ἀπαντάτω εἰς ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ ἡλαυνον καὶ ἐδίωκον ἅπαντας τοὺς ἐν ἀμαρτήμασι· μάλιστα μὲν οὐδὲ τότε ἦν τις ἀπολογία· ἔδει γὰρ ἐκκαθαρθέντα ἀπαντᾶν· νυνὶ δὲ οὐδὲ τοῦτο λέγω, ἀλλὰ καὶ πορνεύσης, καὶ μοιχεύσης, καὶ ἀρπάξης, καὶ πλεονεκτῆς, ἀπάντησον εἰς ἐκκλησίαν, ἵνα μάθης μηκέτι τοιαῦτα ποιεῖν· ἔλκω πάντας καὶ ἐπισπῶμαι, καὶ τὰ δίκτυα τοῦ λόγου πανταχόθεν ἀπλώσας, οὐχὶ τοὺς ὑγιαίνοντας, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς νοσοῦντας ἐνταῦθα ζωγρῆσαι ἐπιθυμῶ. Ταῦτα λέγω καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν· ἔλθὲ καὶ θεραπεύου μετ' ἐμοῦ· καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἰατροῦν χρεῖαν ἔχω φαρμάκων· ἄνθρωπος γάρ εἰμι καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς σοδὶ φύσεως ὑποκείμενος πάθεισι. . . .

[*The assumption of the Novatianists in styling themselves Cathari.*]

*Adversus Catharos*].

*Hom. vi.*

[Migne, P. G., LXIII. 492.]

Τίς οὖν ἡ ἀπόνοια αὕτη; τίς ἡ ἀλαζονεία; τίς ἡ μανία; ἄνθρωπος ὢν, σεαυτὸν καθαρὸν καλεῖς, καὶ πέπεισαι εἶναι καθαρός, καὶ πόσης ταῦτα ἀνοίας; καθαρὸν γὰρ ἑαυτὸν λέγων, ὅμοιον τι ποιεῖς, ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις λέγοι τὸ πέλαγος κυμάτων εἶναι καθαρόν. Ὡσπερ οὖν ἐκεῖνο οὐκ ἐπιλείπει τὰ κύματα, οὕτως οὐδὲ ἡμᾶς τὰ ἀμαρτήματα.

[*The various remedies for sins.*]

*Hom. vi.*

[Migne, P. G., LXIII. 492.]

Καὶ γὰρ μυρία ἡμᾶς περιστοιχίζεται κακὰ, ἐὰν σωφρονῶμεν καὶ ἐγρηγοροῦτες ὦμεν, δυνησόμεθα πολλῆς ἀπολογίας τυχεῖν, πολλῆς τῆς συγγνώμης, καὶ ἀπονύφασθαι τὰ πεπλημμελημένα.

Καὶ πῶς ἔσται τοῦτο ἄκουσον· ἂν εἰς ἐκκλησίαν ἀπαντῶμεν, ἂν στενάζωμεν ἐπὶ τοῖς πεπλημμελημένοις, ἂν ὁμολογῶμεν τὰ ἡμαρτημένα, ἂν ἐλεημοσύνας ποιῶμεν, ἂν εὐχὰς ἐπιδειξώμεθα, ἂν ἀδικουμένοις βοηθῶμεν, ἂν τοῖς ἐχθροῖς τὰ ἀμαρτήματα συγκωρῶμεν, ἂν δακρύωμεν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἡμαρτημένοις· ταῦτα γὰρ ἅπαντα φάρμακα τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων ἐστί.

[*Clerks convicted of fornication, perjury, or theft, to be deposed, but not excommunicated; one punishment being adequate.*]

**Apostolic Canons.**

*Can. 24.*

[Mansi, I. 33.]

Ἐπίσκοπος ἢ πρεσβύτερος ἢ διάκονος ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ ἢ ἐπιορκίᾳ ἢ κλοπῇ ἀλοὺς καθαιρείσθω, καὶ μὴ ἀφορίζεσθω· λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφή. Οὐκ ἐκδικήσεις δις ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό· ὁμοίως δὲ οἱ λοιποὶ κληρικοὶ τῇ αὐτῇ αἰρέσει ὑποκείσθωσαν.

[*The same offence visited in a clerk by deposition from office, in a layman by excommunication.*]

*Can. 64.*

[Mansi, I. 41.]

Εἴ τις κληρικὸς ἐν μάχῃ τινὰ κρούσας, καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐνὸς κρούσματος ἀποκτείνει, καθαιρείσθω διὰ τὴν προπέτειαν αὐτοῦ. εἰ δὲ λαϊκὸς εἴη, ἀφορίζεσθω.

*Can. 65.*

Εἴ τις κληρικὸς εὐρέθῃ τὴν κυριακὴν ἡμέραν νηστεύων, ἢ τὸ σάββατον, πλὴν τοῦ ἐνὸς μόνου, καθαιρείσθω. εἰ δὲ λαϊκός, ἀφορίζεσθω.

**CONSTANTINOPLE**

[*Seventh charge against Chrysostom. He teaches that repeated forgiveness is open to repeated sin.*]

**Synodus Ad Quercum habita** (A.D. 403).

[Mansi, III. 1146.]

ἔβδομον, ὅτι ἄδειαν παρέχει τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσι διδασκων ἐὰν πάλιν ἁμάρτης, πάλιν μετανόησον, καὶ ὅσάκις ἂν ἁμαρτάνῃς, ἐλθὲ πρὸς με, καὶ ἐγὼ σε θεραπεύσω.

[*The story of Acesius, the Novatianist bishop, and Constantine.*]

**Socrates, Historia Ecclesiastica.**

*I. 10.*

[Migne, P. G., LXVII. 100.]

Μετὰ οὖν τὸ γραφῆναι καὶ ὑπογραφῆναι παρὰ τῆς συνόδου τὸν ὅρον τῆς πίστεως, ἡρώτα ὁ βασιλεὺς τὸν Ἀκέσιον, εἰ καὶ αὐτὸς τῇ πίστει συντίθεται, καὶ τῷ ὀρισμῷ τῆς τοῦ Πάσχα ἑορτῆς. Ὁ δὲ, Οὐδὲν καινὸν, ἔφη, ὦ βασιλεῦ, ἢ σύνοδος ὤρισεν. Οὕτω γὰρ ἄνωθεν καὶ ἐξ ἀρχῆς, ἐκ τῶν ἀποστολικῶν χρόνων παρέληφα καὶ τὸν ὅρον τῆς πίστεως καὶ τὸν χρόνον τῆς τοῦ Πάσχα ἑορτῆς. Ἐπανερομένου οὖν τοῦ βασιλέως, Διὰ τί οὖν τῆς κοινωνίας χωρίζῃ; ἐκεῖνος τὰ ἐπὶ Δεκίου γενόμενα κατὰ τὸν διωγμὸν ἐδίδασκε· καὶ τὴν ἀκρίβειαν τοῦ αὐστηροῦ κανόνος ἔλεγεν, ὡς ἄρα οὐ χρὴ τοὺς μετὰ τὸ βάπτισμα ἡμαρτηκότας ἁμαρτίαν, ἣν πρὸς θάνατον καλοῦσιν αἱ θεῖαι Γραφαί, τῆς κοινωνίας τῶν θείων μυστηρίων ἀξιοῦσθαι, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ μετάνοιαν μὲν αὐτοὺς προτρέπειν· ἐλπίδα τῆς ἀφέσεως μὴ παρὰ τῶν ἱερέων, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκδέχεσθαι, τοῦ δυναμένου καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔχοντος συγχωρεῖν ἁμαρτήματα. Ταῦτα εἰπόντος τοῦ



**Socrates.**

Ἀκεσίον, ἐπειπεῖν τὸν βασιλέα, Θεὸς, ὦ Ἀκέσιε, κλίμακα, καὶ μόνος ἀνάβηθι εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν.

[*Why Nectarius suppressed the priest penitentiary.*]

V. 19.

[*Migne, P. G., LXVII. 614.*]

Ὑπὸ δὲ τὸν αὐτὸν χρόνον, ἔδοξε καὶ τοὺς ἐπὶ τῆς μετανοίας περιελεῖν πρεσβυτέρους τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, δι' αἰτίαν τοιαύτην. Ἀφ' οὗ Ναυατιανοὶ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας διεκρίθησαν, τοῖς ἐπταικόσιν ἐν τῷ ἐπὶ Δεκίου διωγμῷ κοινωνῆσαι μὴ θελήσαντες, οἱ ἐπίσκοποι τῷ ἐκκλησιαστικῷ κανόνι τὸν πρεσβύτερον τὸν ἐπὶ τῆς μετανοίας προσέθεσαν, ὅπως ἂν οἱ μετὰ τὸ βάπτισμα παίσαντες, ἐπὶ τοῦ προβληθέντος τούτου πρεσβύτερον ἐξομολογῶνται τὰ ἁμαρτήματα. Οὗτος ὁ κανὼν κρατεῖ μέχρι νῦν ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις αἱρέσεσι. Μόνοι δὲ οἱ τοῦ ὁμοουσίου φρονήματος, καὶ οἱ τούτοις κατὰ τὴν πίστιν ὁμόφρονες Ναυατιανοὶ, τὸν ἐπὶ τῆς μετανοίας πρεσβύτερον παρητήσαντο. Ναυατιανοὶ μὲν γὰρ οὐδὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν τὴν προσθήκην ταύτην ἐδέξαντο. Οἱ δὲ νῦν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν κρατοῦντες, ἕως πολλοῦ φυλάξαντες, ἐπὶ Νεκταρίου τοῦ ἐπισκόπου μετέθεσαν, τοιούτου τινὸς ἐπὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν συμβάντος. Γυνή τις τῶν εὐγενῶν προσήλθεν τῷ ἐπὶ τῆς μετανοίας πρεσβυτέρῳ· καὶ κατὰ μέρος ἐξομολογεῖται τὰς ἁμαρτίας, ἃς ἐπεπράχει μετὰ τὸ βάπτισμα. Ὁ δὲ πρεσβύτερος παρήγγειλε τῇ γυναικί, νηστεύειν καὶ συνεχῶς εὔχεσθαι, ἵνα σὸν τῇ ὁμολογίᾳ καὶ ἔργον τι δεικνύειν ἔχη τῆς μετανοίας ἄξιον. Ἡ δὲ γυνὴ προβαίνουσα καὶ ἄλλοπταῖσμα ἑαυτῆς κατηγορεῖ. Ἐλεγε γὰρ, ὡς εἶη συγκαθευδήσας αὐτῇ τῆς ἐκκλησίας διάκονος. Τοῦτο λεχθὲν, τὸν μὲν διάκονον τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐκπεσεῖν παρεσκεύασε. Ταραχὴ δὲ κατέσχε τὰ πλήθη· ἡγανάκτουν γὰρ οὐ μόνον ἐπὶ τῷ γενομένῳ, ἀλλ' ὅτι καὶ τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ βλασφημίαν ἢ πράξεις καὶ ὕβριν προὔξενησεν. Διασυρομένων δὲ ἐκ τούτου τῶν ἱερωμένων ἀνδρῶν, Εὐδαίμων τις τῆς Ἐκκλησίας πρεσβύτερος, Ἀλεξανδρεὺς τὸ γένος, γνώμην τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ δίδωσι Νεκταρίῳ, περιελεῖν μὲν τὸν ἐπὶ τῆς μετανοίας πρεσβύτερον, συγχωρῆσαι δὲ ἕκαστον, τῷ ἰδίῳ συνειδóτι τῶν μυστηρίων μετέχειν· οὕτω γὰρ μόνως ἔχειν τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν τὸ ἀβλασφήμητον. Ταῦτα παρὰ τοῦ Εὐδαίμονος ἀκούσας ἐγὼ, τῇ γραφῇ τῇδε παραδοῦναι ἐθάρρῃσα. Ὡς γὰρ πολλάκις ἔφην, πᾶσαν σπουδὴν παρ' ἑκάστου τῶν εἰδότων ἐθέμην μαθάνειν τὰ πράγματα, καὶ ἀκριβῶς ἐρευνᾶν, ἵνα μὴ ἔξω τῆς ἀληθείας τι γράφοιμι, ἐγὼ δὲ πρὸς τὸν Εὐδαίμονα πρότερον ἔφην. Ἡ συμβουλή σου, ὦ πρεσβύτερε, εἰ συνήνεγκε τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἢ εἰ μὴ, Θεὸς ἂν εἰδείῃ· ὁρῶ δὲ ὅτι πρόφασιν παρέσχε τοῦ μὴ ἐλέγχειν ἀλλήλων τὰ ἁμαρτήματα, μηδὲ φυλάττειν τὸ τοῦ Ἀποστόλου παράγγελμα τὸ λέγον· Μηδὲ συγκοινωνεῖτε τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς ἀκάργοις τοῦ σκότους, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ ἐλέγχετε. Περὶ μὲν οὖν τούτων αὐτάρκως εἰρήσθω.

[*S. Chrysostom invites those who have repented a thousand times. Opposition of Sisinnius and others.*]

VI. 21.

[*Migne, P. G., LXVII. 726.*]

Θαυμάσαι δέ μοι ἔπεισι, πῶς τοσοῦτον ζῆλον σωφροσύνης ἀσκῶν, ἐν προσομιλίας αὐτοῦ καταφρονεῖν τῆς σωφροσύνης ἐδίδαξε. Μιᾶς γὰρ μετὰ

**Socrates.**

τὸ βάπτισμα παρὰ τῆς συνόδου τῶν ἐπισκόπων μετανοίας τοῖς ἐπτακόσι δοθείσης αὐτὸς ἀπετόλμησεν εἰπεῖν· χιλιάκις μετανοήσας εἰσελθε. Ἐφ' ἣ διδασκαλίᾳ πολλοὶ μὲν καὶ τῶν γνωρίμων αὐτοῦ κατέγνωσαν· μάλιστα δὲ Σισίνιος ὁ τῶν Ναυατιανῶν ἐπίσκοπος. Ὅς καὶ λόγον ὑπεναντίον τοῦ λεχθέντος συνέγραψεν, καὶ γενναίως αὐτοῦ διατοῦτο κατέδραμεν.

[Another account of the circumstances which led to the suppression of the penitentiary.]

**Sozomen, Historia Ecclesiastica.**

VII. 16.

[Migne, P. G., LXVII. 1457.]

Ἐν τούτῳ δὲ, τῶν ἐπὶ τῶν μετανοούντων τεταγμένον πρεσβύτερον οὐκέτι συνεχώρησεν εἶναι πρῶτος Νεκτάριος ὁ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ἐπιτροπεύων. Ἐπηκολούθησαν δὲ σχεδὸν οἱ πανταχοῦ ἐπίσκοποι. Τοῦτο δὲ τί ποτέ ἐστι, ἣ πόθεν ἤρξατο, ἣ κατὰ ποίαν αἰτίαν ἐπαύσατο, ἄλλοι μὲν ἴσως ἄλλως λέγουσιν. Ἐγὼ δὲ ὡς οἶμαι ἀφηγήσομαι. Ἐπεὶ γὰρ τὸ μὴ παντελῶς ἁμαρτεῖν, θειοτέρας ἢ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ἐδεῖτο φύσεως, μεταμελουμένοις δὲ καὶ πολλάκις ἁμαρτάνουσι συγγνώμην νέμειν ὁ Θεὸς παρεκελεύσατο, ἐν τῷ παραιτεῖσθαι συνομολογεῖν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν χρεῶν, φορτικὸν ὡς εἰκὸς, ἐξ ἀρχῆς τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν ἔδοξεν, ὡς ἐν θεάτρῳ ὑπὸ μάρτυρι τῷ πλήθει τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἐξαγγέλλειν· πρεσβύτερον δὲ τῶν ἄριστα πολιτευομένων, ἐχέμενόν τε καὶ ἔμφρονα, ἐπὶ τοῦτο τετάχασιν. Ὁ δὲ προσιόντες οἱ ἡμαρτηκότες, τὰ βεβιωμένα ὡμολογούν· ὁ δὲ, πρὸς τὴν ἐκάστου ἁμαρτίαν, ὃ τι χρὴ ποιῆσαι ἢ ἐκτίσαι ἐπιτίμιον θεῖς, ἀπέλυε, παρὰ σφῶν αὐτῶν τὴν δίκην εἰσπραξαμένους. Ἀλλὰ Ναυατιανοῖς μὲν, οἷς οὐ λόγος μετανοίας οὐδὲν τούτου ἐδέησεν. Ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἄλλαις αἰρέσεσιν, εἰς ἔτι νῦν τοῦτο κρατεῖ. Ἐπιμελῶς δὲ καὶ ἐν ταῖς κατὰ Δύσιν Ἐκκλησίαις φυλάττεται, καὶ μάλιστα ἐν τῇ Ῥωμαίων. Ἐνθάδε γὰρ ἔκδηλος ἐστὶν ὁ τόπος τῶν ἐν μετανοίᾳ ὄντων· ἐστᾶσι δὲ κατηφεῖς, καὶ οἷον ἐπενθοῦντες. Ἦδη δὲ πληρωθείσης τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ λειτουργίας, μὴ μετασχόντες ὧν μύσταις θέμις, σὺν οἰμωγῇ καὶ ὀδυρμῷ πρηνεῖς ἐπὶ γῆς ῥίπτουσι σφᾶς. Ἀντιπρόσωπος δὲ δεδακρυμένος ὁ ἐπίσκοπος προσδραμὼν, ὁμοίως ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐδάφους πίπτει· σὺν ὀλολυγῇ καὶ τὸ πᾶν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας πλήθος δακρύων ἐμπιπλάται. Τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο δὲ, πρῶτος ὁ ἐπίσκοπος ἐξανίσταται, καὶ τοὺς κειμένους ἀνίστησι· καὶ ἡ προσήκειν ὑπὲρ ἡμαρτηκώτων μεταμελουμένων εὐξάμενος, ἀποπέμπει. Καθ' ἑαυτὸν δὲ ἐκοντὶ τάλαιπωρὸς ἕκαστος, ἢ νηστείας, ἢ ἀλουσίων, ἢ ἐδεσμάτων ἀποχῇ, ἢ ἑτεροῖς οἷς προστέτακται, περιμένει τὸν χρόνον, εἰς ὅσον αὐτῷ τέταχεν ὁ ἐπίσκοπος. Τῇ δὲ προθεσμίᾳ, ὥσπερ τι ὄφλημα διαλύσας τὴν τιμωρίαν, τῆς ἁμαρτίας ἀνίεται, καὶ μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ ἐκκλησιάζει. Τάδε μὲν ἀρχῆθεν οἱ Ῥωμαίων ἱερεῖς ἄχρι καὶ εἰς ἡμᾶς φυλάττουσιν. Ἐν δὲ τῇ Κωνσταντινουπόλει Ἐκκλησίᾳ, ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν μετανοούντων τεταγμένος πρεσβύτερος ἐπολιτεύετο. Εἰσότε δὲ γυνή τις τῶν εὐπατριδῶν, ἐπὶ ἁμαρτίαις αἷς προσήγγειλε, προσταχθεῖσα παρὰ τούτου τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου νηστεύειν, καὶ τὸν Θεὸν ἱκετεύειν, τούτου χάριν ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ διατρίβουσα, ἐκπεπορνεῦσθαι παρ' ἀνδρὸς διακόνου κατεμήνυσεν. Ἐφ' ᾧ τὸ



**Sozomen.**

πλήθος μαθόν, ἐχαλέπαινε ὡς τῆς ἐκκλησίας ὑβρισμένης. Μεγίστη δὲ διαβολὴ τοὺς ἱερωμένους εἶχεν. Ἀπορῶν δὲ ὃ τι χρήσαιτο τῷ συμβεβηκότι Νεκτάριος, ἀφείλετο τῆς διακονίας τὸν ἡταιρηκότα. Συμβουλευσάντων δέ τινων συγχωρεῖν ἕκαστον, ὡς ἂν ἑαυτῷ συνειδείῃ καὶ θαρρῆν δύναιτο, κοινωνεῖν τῶν μυστηρίων, ἔπαυσε τὸν ἐπὶ τῆς μετανοίας πρεσβύτερον. Καὶ ἐξ ἐκείνου τοῦτο κρατοῦν διέμεινε· ἤδη τῆς ἀρχαιότητος, οἶμαι, καὶ τῆς κατ' αὐτὴν σεμνότητος καὶ ἀκριβείας, εἰς ἀδιάφορον καὶ ἡμελημένον ἦθος κατὰ μικρὸν διολισθαίνειν ἀρξαμένης. Ἐπεὶ πρότερον, ὡς ἡγοῦμαι, μείω τὰ ἁμαρτήματα ἦν, ὑπὸ τὴν αἰδοῦς τῶν ἐξαγγελλόντων τὰς σφῶν αὐτῶν πλημμελείας, καὶ ὑπὸ ἀκριβείας τῶν ἐπὶ τούτῳ τεταγμένων κριτῶν. Ἐκ ταύτης δὲ τῆς αἰτίας συμβάλλω, καὶ Θεοδοσίον τὸν βασιλέα προνοούμενον τῆς τῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν εὐκλείας τε καὶ σεμνότητος νομοθετῆσαι τὰς γυναῖκας, εἰ μὴ παῖδας ἔχοιεν, καὶ ὑπὲρ ἐξήκοντα ἔτη γένοιτο, διακονίαν Θεοῦ μὴ ἐπιτρέπεσθαι, καὶ τὸ ἀποστόλου Παύλου ῥητὸν πρόσταγμα. Τὰς δὲ κειρομένας τὰς κεφαλὰς, ἀπελαύνεσθαι τῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν· τοὺς δὲ ταύτας προσιεμένους ἐπισκόπους ἀφαιρεῖσθαι τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς.

**ALEXANDRIA**

[*As one baptized by the priest is illuminated so one making exomologesis in penitence receives forgiveness through the priest.*]

**S. Athanasius** (c. A.D. 296–373).

*A Fragment.*

[Migne, *P. G.*, XXVI. 1316.]

Ὡς περ ἄνθρωπος ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπου ἱερέως βαπτιζόμενος φωτίζεται τῇ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος χάριτι, οὕτως καὶ ὁ ἐξομολογούμενος ἐν μετανοίᾳ διὰ τοῦ ἱερέως λαμβάνει τὴν ἄφεσιν χάριτι Χριστοῦ.<sup>1</sup>

[*The sin of Simon Magus was not "incurable."*]

*Fragmentum ex sermone III contra Novatianos.*

[Migne, *P. G.*, XXVI. 1317.]

Καὶ τοσαῦτα κατ' αὐτοῦ εἰπὼν ὀρθῶς καὶ δικαίως, οὐδὲν τούτων ἀνίατον ἡγησάμενος τῷ τῆς μετανοίας φαρμάκῳ, θεραπευτικὰ δὲ ταῦτα κρίνας εἶναι, ἐπήγαγε· Μετανόησον οὖν ἀπὸ τῆς κακίας σου, καὶ δεήθητι τοῦ Κυρίου, εἰ ἄρα ἀφεθήσεται σοὶ ἡ ἐπίνοια τῆς καρδίας σου. Μέγα γάρ σοι καὶ τοῦτο. Καὶ μὴ ἤδη τὴν δωρεὰν οὕτως ἀκαθάρτως καὶ ῥυπαρῶς διὰ χρημάτων σπεῦδε. Ἀλλὰ τέως τῆς πικρίας σου καὶ τῆς κακῆς ταύτης ἐπινοίας πανσάμενος, μετανόησον, εἰ ἄρα ἀφεθήσεται σοὶ ἡ ἐπίνοια τῆς καρδίας σου, οὐχ ὡς ἀμφιβάλλων, ἀλλ' ὅτι δυσίατα πάθη, οὐκ ἀνίατα μέντοι, ἀλλὰ δυσίατα. Εἰ γὰρ ἦν ἀνίατον, περισσὸν ἦν τό. Μετανόησον ἀπὸ τῆς κακίας σου ταύτης, καὶ δεήθητι τοῦ Κυρίου.

<sup>1</sup> This fragment, bearing the name of S. Athanasius, is found in *Codice Colb.* 200, which is a catena to Jeremiah. If it be in fact from a writing of S. Athanasius, it may be conjecturally assigned to the lost books against the Novatianists.

**S. Athanasius.**

Ἀλλ' ὅτι ἡ μετάνοια μὲν ἰσχύει διὰ τούτων, ὅτι δὲ μετὰ πολλῆς μετανοίας καὶ ἐπιμελείας χρεῖα τοῖς βαρυνθείσιν εἰς κακίαν, παριστὰς ἐπήγαγεν· Εἰ ἄρα ἀφεθήσεται σοι ἡ ἐπίνοια τῆς καρδίας σου. Εἰς γὰρ χολὴν πικρίας καὶ σύνδεσμον ἀδικίας ὁρῶ σε ὄντα.<sup>1</sup>

[*The indwelling Spirit remits or retains : men effect the operation. These Spirit-bearers act in two ways : (a) in Baptism, (b) in Penitence.*]

**S. Cyril of Alexandria** (A.D. 376–444), *In Joannis Evangelium.*

*In cap. xx. 22, 23.*

[Migne, P. G., LXXIV. 721.]

ᾠρετο γὰρ δεῖν τοὺς τὸ θεῖόν τε καὶ δεσποτικὸν ἔχοντας ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἤδη Πνεῦμα, καὶ τοῦ διαφεῖναι τὰς τινων ἁμαρτίας εἶναι κυρίους, καὶ ὥνπερ ἂν βούλωνται κρατεῖν, τοῦ ἐνοικισθέντος αὐτοῖς ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἀφιέντός τε καὶ κρατοῦντος κατὰ βούλησιν οἰκείαν, κἂν δι' ἀνθρώπων τελῇται τὸ πρᾶγμα τυχόν. Ἀφιασί γε μὴν ἁμαρτίας, ἥτοι κατέχουσιν οἱ πνευματοφόροι, κατὰ δύο τρόπους, κατὰ γε διάνοιαν ἐμήν. Ἡ γὰρ καλοῦσιν ἐπὶ τὸ βάπτισμα τοὺς οἱ ἂν ἤδη καὶ τούτου τυχεῖν ὠφείλετο διὰ τὴν τοῦ βίου σεμνότητα, καὶ τὸ δεδοκιμασμένον εἰς πίστιν, ἣ διακωλύουσι τινες, καὶ τῆς θειᾶς χαρίτος ἐξείργουσιν ἔτι οὐπω τέως γεγονότας ἀξίους. Ἡ καὶ καθ' ἕτερον τρόπον ἀφιασι τε καὶ κρατοῦσιν ἁμαρτίας, ἐπιτιμῶντες μὲν ἁμαρτάνουσι τοῖς τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τέκνοις, μετανοοῦσι δὲ συγγινώσκοντες, καθάπερ ἀμέλει καὶ Παῦλος τὸν ἐν Κορίνθῳ πορνεύσαντα παρεδίδου μὲν εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκὸς, ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῇ, προσίετο δὲ αὐθις, ἵνα μὴ τῇ περισσοτέρᾳ λύπῃ καταποθῇ, καθάπερ αὐτὸς ἐπιστέλλων φησί.

[*Novatianists deny the Divine pronouncement given to the priests to remit sins to men.*]

**S. Isidore of Pelusium** (d. c. A.D. 449).

*Epist. 338.*

[Migne, P. G., LXXVIII. 377.]

Κατὰ Ναυατιανῶν.

Φλήναφον συνείρας ἀπολογούμενος, σχετλιασμὸν συνθεῖς πολυῶδνον, τὴν θεῖαν λέγων μὴ ἰσχύειν ἀπόφασιν, ἥνπερ τοῖς ἱερεῦσι παρέσχετο, ἀφιέναι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὰ πταίσματα. Εἰ δὲ αὕτῃ ἀνίσχυρος πᾶσα πάντως ἀβέβαιος, καὶ εἰς μάτην ἐλπίζομεν, ὥς αὐτὸς ἐδογμάτισας.

<sup>1</sup> The above is taken from the *Anecdota Græca* of J. C. Wolf (IV. 52, ed. Hamburg), and was by him found in a cantena MS. of passages illustrating the Acts of the Apostles.



## FROM A.D. 350 TO A.D. 450

### I. THE EASTERN CHURCHES

THE period from A.D. 350 onwards will now claim attention. In the provinces of Asia Minor it will record the continued establishment and the fuller development of the system of graded penance. Elsewhere in the Church there is seen no such definiteness of ordered arrangement; and no such completeness of control. In the great centres of population the system of graded penance is not found in possession. It had not obtained possession in the generations of chastened obedience which followed on the persecutions. And now that the persecutions were but a memory, while a large proportion of the populations of the cities had professed adhesion to the Church, the day in which it was possible to insist on such a system had passed away. Whether at Antioch, at Constantinople, or at Rome, it is in truth never found practicable so to control men. Nor in the provincial churches of the West—in Africa, in Spain, or in the Gallic provinces—is the system found in force. So far, indeed, from any serious system of discipline being found to exercise effective control on a comprehensive scale, the insight afforded into the moral corruption of the Christian communities by such writers as Salvianus of Marseilles and Paulinus of Pella is simply appalling. The fact appears to be that over the greater part of Christendom there came to be no effective discipline except for (a) those who voluntarily sought it, and (b) a few exceptional and notorious cases indicated for punishment by authority. It is in this period that Nectarius finds it expedient to abolish the office of priest penitentiary at Constantinople; and that S. Chrysostom at Antioch stigmatises the publicity of penance as an intolerable burden. At Rome it would appear that the ancient discipline is better preserved. Yet the altogether voluntary penance of Fabiola, which induced an outburst of admiration on the part of S. Jerome, seems to indicate no great strictness. S. Pacian at Barcelona only asks for penance in the case of the three capital sins, and complains that it is not rendered. S. Augustine in Africa states that a person cannot there be excommunicated except (a) on his confession, or (b) on his conviction by a civil or ecclesiastical sentence. The simple fact which this period makes clear is that everywhere the influx of the world into the Church has brought about an inevitable relaxation of the discipline of the Church.

Introductory statement.

It will be found, however, that while in the great Eastern centres, at Antioch, and at Constantinople, discipline was almost entirely lost; in the Western churches, that is to say, in Rome and the Italian peninsula, in Africa, in Spain, and in Gaul, a certain measure of discipline continued to be exercised at least in the case of those who were willing to accept it. Also alongside of the general relaxation of discipline there can in some Western churches be traced an extraordinary movement in the direction of rigorism directed against those persons who did in fact become technically penitents, at least against those who were penitents for the gravest or capital sins. Such persons were in the Roman church, or in the churches of the West which accepted Roman influences, deemed to be subject to the gravest disabilities for the whole term of life, though long years might have passed since their penance was complete, and their restoration to communion admitted. It may not surprise us that no penitent might be ordained. But also in the ecclesiastical temper of the day it was not held seemly that one who had been a penitent should marry, or that, if already married, he should cohabit with his wife. He could not undertake military service. No games or festivities could be rightly his. His whole life was to be branded with the stigma of the past.

It is not difficult to see how this inordinate strictness would react on the practice of Penance. Already the tendency was to avoid it rather than to accept it. The tendency became all the more pronounced when the consequences of Penance were seen to be worse than the Penance itself; gravely disabling, continuous till death, and answering to no sense of equity in the conscience. Penance except for confession upon the death-bed, tends to be simply laid aside. The period may indeed be said to close upon a Church of lost discipline. It is hardly too much to say that what discipline future ages can exercise, they will have first to recover.

### 1. *The Provinces of Asia Minor.*

Council of  
Laodicea,  
between  
A.D. 344  
and A.D.  
363.

At an uncertain date, which may with probability be placed between A.D. 344 and A.D. 363, a council was held at the city of Laodicea in Phrygia, familiar to the readers of the Revelation of S. John as one of the seven churches of Asia. It is noteworthy that the Revelation of S. John has no place in the list of canonical books put forth by this Laodicean council. As regards the evidence of the council in the matter of penance it will be noted that Laodicea is a city of one of the Asian provinces, Phrygia, and that in point of time it is later than the councils of Ancyra (A.D. 314), Neo-Cæsarea (A.D. 320), and Nicæa (A.D. 325), but prior to the canons of S. Basil the Great (A.D. 374-375).

In the preface to the canons of Laodicea it is stated that the council was assembled from various eparchies of the Asian region. The canons of the council are sixty in number. Two of them may



be cited as bearing on the subject of Penance. The second canon is as follows :—

“Concerning this; that as regards those who sin in different offences, and who abide in the prayer of *exomologesis* and penance, and who entirely renounce their evil courses, a period of penance having been given to such in proportion to the offence, they should on account of the mercies and goodness of GOD be restored to communion.”

Reconciliation accorded to all penitents.

This canon appears to affirm the same principle as had been reached by the thirteenth canon of Nicæa that the Church was prepared to reconcile sinners in this life after any sins soever. It is of course an entire repudiation of the attitude assumed by the Novatianists.

The nineteenth canon is a highly important record of the procedure in the Liturgy :—

“Concerning this; that it is necessary in the first place after the addresses of the bishops, that the prayer of the catechumens should be separately made: and that after the catechumens have gone out the prayers of those in penitence should have place: and that when these have come up under the hand and have retired, the prayers of the faithful should thus be made in threefold wise; one prayer, the first, to be effected in silence, the second and third by speech, and that then the peace should be given. And after the priests have given the bishop the peace, that then the laity should give the peace; and that thus the holy Offering should be fulfilled; and that it be lawful only for ordained persons to enter to the altar, and to communicate.”

Procedure in the Liturgy.

It thus appears that after the addresses of the bishops there were three separate courses of prayer; first, the prayer of the catechumens, who made their prayer and left; next the prayer of the penitents, who made their prayer and then “came up under the hand,” that is to say received a ceremonial imposition of hands, which was not absolution, but rather a sort of formal acceptance of the persons as Christian brethren under discipline; and lastly, after the penitents had left, the prayer of the faithful, itself threefold, which was followed by the giving of the peace, and the completion of the “holy Offering.”

S. Basil of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, commonly known as S. Basil the Great, was born at Cæsarea in A.D. 329. In his early years he was brought up by his grandmother, Macrina, at her home near Neo-Cæsarea in Pontus, where the memory of S. Gregory the Wonderworker remained in honour. His student years were spent first at Cæsarea, and later at Constantinople and at Athens. It is interesting to note that except for the years at Constantinople and at Athens, the whole life of S. Basil was spent in those provinces of Asia where the graded system of penance had become

S. Basil the Great.

His  
"canons"  
record the  
customary  
discipline.

the rule. That the system was at this time established in the Asian provinces is clear from the canons of the Council of Ancyra (A.D. 314). And it would be a great mistake to indicate S. Basil as the author of the system. His three *canonical epistles*, as they are termed, in which he indicates suitable penances for particular cases of offence, have taken high rank among the collections of canons in the East. It is, in fact, in these "canons" of S. Basil that is first found the indication of the duration of the penance in many cases. But it should be noted that in such indication S. Basil commonly refers to the custom which was accepted and in force, that is to say, accepted and in force at Cæsarea and in the neighbouring churches. S. Gregory Thaumaturgus, the true author of the system, had never referred to previous or existing custom as an authority. With S. Basil it is the leading authority.

The canonical epistles of S. Basil were written in the years A.D. 374-375 to S. Amphilochius of Iconium, and are numbered in the collection of S. Basil's letters as 188, 199, and 217. They are as frequently referred to as the first, second, and third canonical epistles. In them S. Basil answers inquiries which S. Amphilochius had made of him. The numbering of the canons as canons is not due to S. Basil, but is convenient for purposes of reference.

Instances.

Some of Basil's decisions may now be cited. "We receive a custom," he says, "that trigamists should undergo five years separation (from communion)." This is "not from canons but from the following of those who went before us." They are not to be excluded from the church building, but to be placed among the *Hearers* for two or three years, and afterwards to be *Bystanders*. As *Bystanders* they will still refrain from communion of "the Good" (*i. e.* the Eucharist). Thus, having shown some fruits of penance, they may be restored to the place of communion (*Can.* 4). Basil classes the capital sins of murder and poisoning, of adultery, and of idolatry, with the grave unnatural sins of sodomy and bestiality; and accounts offenders in all these sins as worthy of parallel penance. He says we ought not to doubt that persons who for thirty years have done penance for uncleanness which they committed in ignorance, may be received. It will be remembered that this enormous term of penance had been prescribed by the Council of Ancyra for certain unnatural sins: and here we find that this long term was actually fulfilled in the practice of the Asian churches, and that too in the case of persons who had not been fully cognizant of what they were doing. In S. Basil's judgment three things conspire to make them worthy of pardon: their original ignorance, their voluntary confession, and the long duration of their penance (*Can.* 7).

In cases of unpremeditated homicide (manslaughter) S. Basil judges that the offender has rendered satisfaction sufficiently in eleven years (*Can.* 11). The Council of Ancyra had referred to two older regulations prescribing seven and five years respectively.



S. Basil refers with some disapproval to the custom of his day which reckoned a wife's unfaithfulness as always adultery, but a husband's as not adultery if committed with an unmarried woman; but he says: "The custom is in force" (*Can.* 21). The period of penance determined for fornication is four years; determined, as it would seem, by custom. The offender is to weep at the door of the church for a year; in the second year to be received to the *Hearing*; in the third to *μεράνεια*, by which seems meant the *Falling*; in the fourth among the *Bystanders*, abstaining from "the offering"; and that then at last the communion of "the Good" may be permitted them (*Can.* 22). S. Basil can find no ancient rule as regards persons who have offended by forcible abduction. He assigns three years of exclusion from the *Prayers* (*Can.* 30). Clerks who commit mortal sin are to be degraded, but not repelled from lay communion. "Thou shalt not punish twice for the same" <sup>1</sup> (*Can.* 32). The section numbered as canon 34 is interesting.

"In the case of women guilty of adultery, and who confess through piety, or howsoever they may be convicted, our fathers did not give orders to expose (δημοσιεύειν) them, lest by proving their guilt we should afford a ground of death; but commanded that they should stand (*i. e.* among the *Bystanders*) without communion till the time of their penance should be fulfilled."

It thus appears that adulteresses made no public confession, though some at least made a private confession of their sin; that with the express purpose of shielding them from public notice and from the punishments of secular law or custom which might result, their penance was to be fulfilled in the highest of all the grades short of communion, where no other serious offenders were allowed to begin; that this was the practice of "our fathers"; and that S. Basil ratifies it. A deaconess who has committed fornication with a Greek may be admitted to communion in seven years (*Can.* 44). The ruling as to a person guilty of wilful murder is important. The Council of Ancyra had only permitted communion at death; a permission confirmed by the general direction of the Council of Nicæa as to communicating all worthy penitents before death. S. Basil rules that twenty years' exclusion from the Hallowed Things will meet the case.

"For four years he ought to be a *Mourner*, standing outside the portal of the house of prayer, beseeching the faithful as they enter to make supplication on his behalf, and acknowledging his own sinfulness. After the four years he shall be received among the *Hearers*, and for five years shall leave with them. For seven years he shall worship and leave with those in the *Falling*. For four years he shall be a *Bystander* only

<sup>1</sup> Nahum i. 9 (LXX). Cf. *Apostolical Canons*, 24.

among the faithful, and shall not share the offering. These terms fulfilled, he shall partake of the Hallowed Things."

This is the first indication of the reception of a wilful murderer to communion at any time before his last sickness. The shedder of blood, no less than the adulterer and the apostate, may now find reconciliation after a term of penance fulfilled (*Can. 56*).

In his third canonical epistle Basil assigns ten years' penance for unpremeditated bloodshed. It will be remembered that in his first epistle he had indicated eleven years. The ten years are to be passed two in the *Mourning*, three among the *Hearers*, four as a *Faller*, and one as a *Bystander* (*Can. 57*).

An adulterer incurs fifteen years' penance, of which four are to be spent as a *Mourner*, five as a *Hearer*, four as a *Faller*, two as a *Bystander* (*Can. 58*). A fornicator incurs seven years' exclusion from communion, two as a *Mourner*, two as a *Hearer*, two as a *Faller*, one as a *Bystander* (*Can. 59*).

How far  
were these  
regulations  
operative?

In the face of such a regulation as the last quoted a student who possesses some acquaintance with the moral condition of any considerable baptized community, whether at the present day, or in history, is likely to ask to what extent these rules were operative. Did the conscience of the community respond to the assumption which appears to be made that an offending person was bound to confess all such sin, and to accept the long term of penance indicated before daring to present himself for communion?

A con-  
spiracy of  
silence.

S. Basil evidently experienced grave difficulties in the enforcement of the system. It was not his system: he had found it in practice in the provinces of Asia from his childhood: and as bishop he is only seeking to convert precedent into regulation, and to replace variation and uncertainty by uniformity and precision. But he is conscious of a conspiracy of silence. Men who have not sinned notoriously do not speak; and their acquaintance, who know their faults, and who in Basil's judgment are bound to report them, do not speak either. Basil's imperious temper finds expression in the monstrous provision which is numbered Canon 71.

"Whosoever shares the knowledge (of the committal) of any of the aforesaid sins, and does not confess them, but is convicted of it (his knowledge); for so long a time of penalty as that to which the committer of the offence has been sentenced, shall be also he under penalty."

Unreason-  
able penalty  
for silence.

Such a provision is on the face of it so grossly unfair, that it must needs have been a dead letter from the first. To take the case of a man who has come to know of a friend's fall from purity, and does not choose to give information about it; such an one by Basil's rule incurs seven years' exclusion from communion, passed in various grades of penance. Is it conceivable that such a discipline could ever have been enforced? And in truth history has no record of any such enforcement. This canon is a great



difficulty to the commentators. Balsamon is of opinion that the sharing of knowledge must mean the rendering of aid, or the proffer of evil counsel; or at least the failure to hinder when able to do so.<sup>1</sup> But Basil's canon knows nothing of all this. Zonaras would confine the scope of the rule to consciousness of sins committed by members of the clerical body.<sup>1</sup> But here again this is not what Basil says.

The apostate may only be communicated on his death-bed. In Canon 73 Basil rules that

“he who has denied Christ and violated the mystery of salvation must be a *Mourner* (προσκλαίειν) for the whole duration of his life, and is under obligation to do penance (ἐξομολογεῖσθαι χρεωστῆι), yet, through faith in the clemency of GOD, let him be held worthy of the *Hallowed Thing* at the time of his departure from life.”

An apostate only to be communicated before death.

With the passing of the days of persecution the theoretical attitude towards the apostate has hardened. While the punishment of even the wilful murderer has come down to twenty years of penance; nothing short of the whole term of life will suffice for the apostate.

But all these rigorous regulations have to be read in the light of a provision which doubtless in practice greatly altered their character :—

A bishop may use discretion in assigning penance.

“If, however, any of those who have committed sins as aforesaid be fervent in his exercise of penance (ἐξομολογούμενος); he who has been entrusted by the Divine clemency with the power to loose and bind, if he incline to clemency seeing the superabundant *exomologesis* of the sinner, and do reduce the time of the penalties, is not deserving of condemnation (Can. 74).

This admission that, when all regulations had been made, the bishop was at liberty to modify the penances at his discretion, obviously opened a very wide door. Zonaras, commenting on S. Basil in the twelfth century remarks :—

“The great Basil, having reckoned varying times of penance for various sins, in the end left all to the high priests (ἀρχιερεῖσιν). For these are they who have been entrusted by GOD with binding and loosing, and ‘if these,’ he says, see offenders earnestly making *exomologesis*, and showing fervour in their repentance, and do on this account shorten the appointed times, they shall not be deserving of condemnation.”

A provision which “in the end left all to the high priests” made it possible even in the churches of the Asian provinces to administer a discipline very different in detail from that which is laid down in the letters of S. Basil: and this provision should never

Important results of this discretion.

<sup>1</sup> P. G., CXXXVIII. 773-776.

be lost sight of in forming a judgment as to the scope of the operation of the Basilian canons.

Fervency  
of penance  
to be re-  
garded.

In another passage (*Can.* 84) Basil puts in a *caveat* against merely mechanical penance.

“All this we write in order to approve the fruits of penitence. For we do not judge such matters altogether by the time occupied, but we give heed to the character of the penitence.”

S. Gregory  
of Nyssa.

S. Gregory of Nyssa was the younger brother of S. Basil the Great, probably born at Cæsarea. He does not seem to have had his brother's advantages of education, and was probably brought up in the schools of his native city. He was induced by Basil's dominating will to become bishop of Nyssa, an obscure town of Cappadocia Prima, about ten miles from Cæsarea. At no time in his life does he seem to have resided outside those Asian provinces which had adopted the graded system of penance: and it will be in keeping with this that the provisions which stand in his name give effect to that system. These provisions are found in a letter to Letoius, bishop of Melitene.

Examples  
of his pro-  
visions.

Some examples may be cited. Apostasy involves lifelong penance. Communion may be accorded to the apostate when death is imminent: but, if he recover, he is to be again excluded. Some relaxation is allowed to those who lapsed under torture, and for such a determinate period of penance is admissible, the measure being the same as that assigned for fornicators. A distinction is to be observed between offenders in sins of lust who spontaneously confess, and those who are apprehended in their offence or are convicted on the accusation of another. For fornication S. Gregory assigns nine years' penance in three grades. For three years they are to be cast out altogether “from the prayer,” an expression which in S. Gregory does not mean merely exclusion from the great Eucharistic prayer, but from all participation in the worship. In other words, the three years are to be spent among the *Mourners*. The next three years are passed in the *Hearing*, and the last three among the *Fallers*. But it is lawful for the bishop (τῷ οἰκονομοῦντι) to shorten the time of the *Hearing*, and also that of the *Falling*. It is evidently implied that he ought not to shorten the three first bitter years of the *Mourning*. For adultery, and other grave offences of lust, the period of penance is to be doubled; but, as before, the term may be modified for a fervent penitent. The term of penance assigned for wilful homicide or murder is twenty-seven years; which again may be relaxed by the penitentiary.

The grades  
of penance.

Confession  
to a priest  
of the sin  
of theft.

An interesting passage shows the use of confession to a priest (τῷ ἱερεῖ) recognised in the case of sins not regarded as having the capital character.

“Whosoever by secret theft appropriates the property of another, if by confession (ἐξυγορεύσεως) he has shown his



transgression to the priest, he will heal his sickness by zeal in the contrary direction to his infirmity; I mean by giving his possessions to the poor in order that by spending what he has, he may be manifestly cleansed from the disease of avarice. But if he have nothing but his body only the Apostle orders that such an one do remedy his infirmity by bodily labour."

It is now possible to review what is known about the system of graded penance. Based, as it would seem upon the system which graded catechumens or persons under instruction for Baptism, and gave them a more or less restricted admission to the public devotions of the faithful, the system of graded penance takes definite and formal shape in the hands of S. Gregory Thaumaturgus, bishop of Neo-Cæsarea in Pontus in the second half of the third century. It extends to the adjacent provinces, to Cappadocia on the south, to Galatia on the south-west, to Bithynia on the west. It becomes established as a custom, which is at once accepted and defined by the councils of Ancyra in Galatia in A.D. 314, and of Neo-Cæsarea in Cappadocia in A.D. 320. It finds recognition in some of the canons of Nicæa (A.D. 325).

Review of  
the system  
of graded  
penance.

It is extended and elaborated by S. Basil the Great, metropolitan of Cæsarea in Cappadocia (A.D. 370-379), who in various cases defines the period of penance where this had not been done before, but who bases all the time on the custom actually in force around him. S. Gregory of Nyssa (bp. A.D. 372-395) is found imposing regulations on the same lines, with some differences of detail, but with entire agreement as to the general character of the system in force. That system, as a detailed and developed order of discipline, may be roughly identified in place with the provinces of Asia Minor, and in time with the course of the fourth century. Beyond the bounds of the Asian provinces, or later than the close of the fourth century, the system will not seriously come into evidence.

It may be noted here that the churches employing the graded system of penance give no evidence of the use of any formal or symbolic act or expression of reconciliation other than the admission of the person to communion. The nineteenth canon of the Council of Laodicea bears witness to a formal procedure in the Liturgy during the time of penance, in the course of which the penitents "came up under the hand": but there is no indication that in these churches the laying-on of hands was employed for absolution. Nor is mention made of any verbal form of absolution, precatory or affirmative. When the prescribed penance in the series of grades has been accomplished, the person is said to "proceed to communion" (προσάγεσθαι τῇ κοινωνίᾳ);<sup>1</sup> it is right "to restore him to the place of communion" (ἀποκαθιστᾶν τῷ τοπῷ τῆς κοινωνίας).<sup>2</sup> Such persons are "then to undertake the communion of the Good" (εἰτα αὐτοὺς ἐπιτρέπεσθαι τὴν κοινωνίαν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ).<sup>3</sup> When

No formal  
act of  
absolution.

<sup>1</sup> *Con. Laod.*, c. 2.

<sup>2</sup> S. Basil, *Ep. Can.*, c. 4.

<sup>3</sup> C. 22.

the penances have been fulfilled the person will partake of the Sanctified Things (πληρωθέντων δὲ τούτων μετέξει τῶν ἁγιασμάτων);<sup>1</sup> he will "thereupon be received to the Holy Things" (καὶ τῷ ἐξῆς εἰς τὰ ἅγια δεχθήσεται);<sup>2</sup> will be "received to the communion" (δεχθήσεται εἰς τὴν κοινωνίαν);<sup>3</sup> be thought worthy of the Sanctified (τοῦ ἁγιαματος ἀξιούμενος),<sup>4</sup> or of participation in the Sanctified (τότε τῆς τοῦ ἁγιασματος μερίδος ἀξιωθήσεται.<sup>5</sup> τότε μετέχειν τῶν ἁγιασμάτων).<sup>5</sup> The bishop may cut short the time, and more quickly give the communion (συντεμεῖν τὸν χρόνον, καὶ τάχιον ἀποδοῦναι τὴν κοινωνίαν).<sup>5</sup> According to the fervour of penitence "the participation of the Good may come more quickly or more slowly" (ἢ θάπτον ἢ βραδύτερον γενέσθαι αὐτοῖς τὴν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μεθουσίαν).<sup>5</sup> The homicide after specified penance may "thus come to the partaking of the Sanctified" (οὕτως ἐλθεῖν ἐπὶ τὴν μετουσίαν τοῦ ἁγιασματος).<sup>5</sup>

The impression conveyed by these statements is that when the person had fulfilled the prescribed penance he stood no longer bound. His binding by the Church under the graded system had been severe. It had been definite and particularised to an extraordinary extent. Each grade had its assigned place, its proper procedure, its special permissions. The time in each grade was exactly defined: and if the bishop intervened to shorten the time, the revised duration was still exact. As the hour-glass ran down the penitent Christian who had been held by the Church so strictly bound was now no longer bound. He proceeded to communion: and there was none to hinder him.

## 2. Antioch.

The city of Antioch.

Antioch in Syria, founded by Seleucus Nicator three centuries before Christ, had succeeded Tyre as the great centre and capital of the eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean. Situated on the banks of the Orontes, some fifteen miles from the sea, in a lovely and fertile plain, with a climate of luxurious charm, it had from its first foundation attracted and retained a large and heterogeneous population. Greek, Roman, and Asiatic jostled one another in its fine colonnaded streets.<sup>6</sup> It was, however, predominantly a Syrian city: and it would seem that the Syrian temper, naturally soft and relaxed, received the polish of Hellenic culture only to become conspicuous even in the Roman empire for a dissolute voluptuousness. Yet in such a city had the first Gentile church been founded: and here it was that the disciples of Jesus Christ had first acquired the name of Christians. From Antioch as a centre had S. Paul and S. Barnabas set forth upon their missionary journeys; and to the Asian churches of their foundation the church of Antioch had seemed in a mother's place. S. Ignatius,

<sup>1</sup> C. 56.

<sup>2</sup> C. 57.

<sup>3</sup> C. 59.

<sup>4</sup> C. 73.

<sup>5</sup> S. Gregory Nyssen, *Ep. Can.*

<sup>6</sup> Or rather *street*. The city was traversed from end to end by one colonnaded street, thirty-six *stadia* in length (Dion Chrysostom, *Dindorf*, II. 134).



glorious among martyrs, had been bishop of Antioch when the days of the apostles had passed: and in the after years the see of Antioch had been clearly marked out as the natural seat of the Eastern patriarchate.<sup>1</sup> The population of the city, which in the third century before Christ had numbered 300,000 free citizens, could still be reckoned as reaching 200,000 in the days of Chrysostom. Of these 100,000 were to be found in the assemblies of the Christian people, and it is with this Christian population of 100,000 and the penitential discipline which with that population was possible or practised that this investigation will now be concerned.

The conspicuous authority for Christian Antioch in the second half of the fourth century is S. Chrysostom. Chrysostom was by birth and training an Antiochene. His father, Secundus, held high military rank. Secundus may or may not have been a Christian. Chrysostom was born in or about the year A.D. 347, and his father died during his infancy. Anthusa, Chrysostom's mother, left a widow at the age of twenty, turned resolutely from all suggestions of second marriage, and devoted herself to the education of her two children, Chrysostom and his sister. Anthusa was a devout Christian lady, and under her guidance Chrysostom received an excellent education. To Libanius, the foremost teacher of rhetoric at Antioch, but a pagan, Chrysostom was indebted for an introduction to Greek literature, and to the arts of literary composition and of oratory. At the same time he would doubtless receive some instruction in the faith and practice of the Christian Church. But it comes as a surprise to the modern reader to learn that he was not baptized till he had attained to manhood. At twenty under religious conviction he became a catechumen, and after three years of probation was at length baptized by the bishop Meletius in his twenty-third year (c. A.D. 370). Meletius at once made him a reader (*ἀναγνώστης*); and as such his office would be to read the scripture lessons in the earlier part of the Liturgy, the *missa catechumenorum*.

S. Chrysostom the authority for Christian Antioch.

The life of S. Chrysostom falls naturally into five divisions. <sup>His life.</sup> These are: (1) the twenty-three years before his baptism, (2) his ascetic and monastic life (A.D. 370–381), (3) his public life as priest and preacher at Antioch (A.D. 381–398), (4) his episcopate at Constantinople (A.D. 398–404), and (5) his exile to his death (A.D. 404–407). His life thus covered sixty years of which only the last nine were spent away from Antioch or its vicinity. The most copious of the Greek fathers,<sup>2</sup> he has left the Church a treasure of many volumes of homilies and writings, which, besides their

<sup>1</sup> S. Basil writes to S. Athanasius (*Ep.* 66): "No one knows better than you do that like all wise physicians you ought to begin your treatment in the most vital parts, and what part is more vital to the churches throughout the world than Antioch?"—"Τὸ δ' ἂν γένοιτο ταῖς κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐκκλησίαις ἡς Ἀντιοχείας ἐπικαιρότερον;"

<sup>2</sup> In the material which has survived.

spiritual value, are of great interest as illustrating the Christianity of Antioch in that age.

No trace  
of graded  
penance.

In the course of his teachings Chrysostom has much to say on penitence and restoration, and also from time to time on the prerogatives of the priesthood, but it is not a little remarkable that nowhere in his writings has any statement been found from which it can be inferred that the graded system of penance was or had ever been in force at Antioch. Nor is any other evidence forthcoming of the adoption by the church of Antioch of that system. As has been noticed above, the three extant lists of the bishops present at Ancyra in A.D. 314 include the name of Vitalis, bishop of Antioch. But these lists are generally discredited, and there is certainly nothing to show that Vitalis or any other prelate succeeded in introducing the system of Ancyra into the Antiochene church. The ancient and distinguished church of the Syrian capital would not naturally have turned aside to learn new ways from the churches of the provinces of Asia Minor in A.D. 314. Her own council, the Council of Antioch of A.D. 252, had united the East, and given voice to the temper of leniency which brought it into line with the West after the cessation of the Decian persecution. There, it would seem, Antioch had rested. And in these later days when at Antioch as in all the great cities of the Roman empire converts had poured in by thousands under the sunshine of the Christian emperors, it was not so much unlikely as impossible that a rigid system of penitential discipline could now be imposed. The system which Gregory the Wonder-worker had found best suited to the ruder converts of his missionary diocese was not a system which could be accepted or endured by the cultured and easy-going thousands who swayed between the orations of Chrysostom and the games of the circus. And it is not a little remarkable that Chrysostom, to himself ever severe, is in this matter of Church discipline the most modern and relaxed of teachers. He is a true Antiochene. He recognises that the methods of severity are here impossible: and he insists that God must have other ways. He is on this subject entirely consistent with himself from youth to age. He is no scoffer at Penance, and no unbeliever in the powers conferred upon the priesthood: but he is entirely opposed to the imposition of long years of discipline, to the "intolerable" publicity involved, and to the infliction of harsh penalties. He is repelled by the mechanical character of the whole system. In contrast with the cut and dried provisions of the Asian canons he develops the teaching that there are several alternative modes of penance acceptable to God, and efficacious for forgiveness. The attitude of S. Chrysostom in this matter has not received from historians the attention which it deserves. It should have much to say alike as to the enthusiasms which he aroused, and as to the enmities which he provoked. It must be understood as not distantly connected

Chrysos-  
tom is a  
modern  
teacher as  
regards  
penance.



with the action of Nectarius at Constantinople in abolishing the office of the priest penitentiary. It was the new guidance of a great representative teacher as to the new state of affairs which had to be met in a world turned Christian.

The earliest writings of S. Chrysostom to which reference can be made are his letters to his friend Theodore, who was proposing to give up the ascetic life and to marry a lady who attracted him. This Chrysostom regarded as a serious lapse, and the letters are known by the title *Ad Theodorum lapsum*. The letters were written when Chrysostom was about twenty-five years old, that is to say, when he had been baptized about two years, and was a reader in the church at Antioch. The writings of so young a man at so early a stage of his Christian experience might not perhaps detain the reader, if it were not that Chrysostom expresses in these letters some important principles, which he maintained in all his after life. Thus he declares that the worst capital sins are not outside God's mercy, instancing fornication, adultery, effeminacy, theft, drunkenness, sodomy, detraction. He affirms that GOD repels not true penitence even for the worst sins; and that he accepts imperfect penitence. He lays down that penitence is to be judged not by the length of time, but by the temper of the mind, and gives as instances the Ninevites, the penitent thief, the martyrs. He greatly deprecates despair, which induces a madness akin to that of Satan, whose madness comes of despair.

*Ad Theodorum lapsum.*

Capital sins not outside God's mercy.

If the view that capital sins might find remission in this life had now found acceptance throughout the Catholic Church, the opposite opinion being confined to the Novatianists; the disregard of the length of time assigned to penance, and the insistence on the equivalent force of other expressions of the repentant spirit mark a new departure. It is a position in direct conflict with the practice of the churches of Asia Minor. It is a position held by Chrysostom in his youth, which he will be found to maintain throughout his life.

Duration of penance disregarded.

The letters to Theodore are assigned to A.D. 372. It is interesting to note that the three letters of S. Basil to Amphilochius styled the *canonical letters* were not written till A.D. 374-375. It is not therefore the case that Chrysostom represents a laxer because a later view than that of Basil. He writes repudiating long terms of penance *before* that great bishop has expressed himself. But it will be remembered that S. Basil in his letters only sought to express and to define the custom of the churches of Cappadocia and the neighbouring provinces. This custom was in fact everywhere in force all about him, and must have prevailed in districts not very distant from Antioch itself. Even Cæsarea was but some two hundred miles from Antioch, a distance which could be covered by the energetic traveller in two days' posting. Intercourse was

These letters prior to the "canonical" letters of S. Basil.

open and constant. The ways of the one set of churches would be known to the other.

*On the Priesthood.*

The next of the writings of Chrysostom which calls for notice is his treatise *On the Priesthood*. It was written in the form of a dialogue between himself and his friend Basil.<sup>1</sup> It is assigned by Socrates to the first days of Chrysostom's diaconate, or about A.D. 382. It exalts the office from which Chrysostom himself so greatly shrank, but of which he held Basil to be worthy. God has committed to the priesthood greater power than to the angels or archangels.

Powers of the priesthood.

“For it has not been said to them, ‘Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’ They who rule on earth have authority to bind, but only the body: whereas this binding lays hold of the soul, and penetrates the heavens; and what priests do here below GOD ratifies above, and the Master confirms the sentence of His servants. For indeed what is it but all manner of heavenly authority which He has given them when He says, ‘Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted, and whose sins ye retain they are retained’? What authority could be greater than this?”<sup>2</sup>

Again, comparing the Christian priests with the priests of the Jewish covenant, he says that they treat not leprosy of the body but uncleanness of the soul, and that they have received authority not merely to pronounce it removed, but to remove it altogether.<sup>3</sup>

Again, priests help souls by prayers. “For not only at the time of regeneration, but afterwards also, they have authority to forgive sins.” Here Chrysostom quotes the instruction of S. James to call for the elders of the Church to pray over a sick man, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;—“and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him.”<sup>3</sup>

Another passage from this treatise may be cited. Chrysostom points out that those who exercise Christian discipline cannot like civil officers employ coercive authority. Penitence must be voluntary.

“On this account it is necessary to use much tact in order that they who are ailing may voluntarily agree to submit themselves to the medicaments of the priests, and not only this, but that they may feel grateful for their healing.”<sup>4</sup>

Here is expressed a point of view more imperiously insistent at Antioch than at Cæsarea. Tact is more to be relied on than compulsion.

*Homilies against the Anomæans.*

Chrysostom was ordained priest by Flavian, the orthodox bishop of Antioch, in A.D. 386. He was then thirty-nine years old. A

<sup>1</sup> Not the bishop of Cæsarea.

<sup>2</sup> iii. 5.

<sup>3</sup> iii. 6.

<sup>4</sup> ii. 3.



few months later he preached a course of twelve homilies against the Anomœans, and in the fifth of these homilies occurs a remarkable passage.

“On this account I exhort and beseech and entreat thee to confess to GOD persistently. I do not take thee into a theatre of thy fellow-servants, or compel thee to disclose thy sins to man. Unroll thy conscience before GOD, and show Him the wounds, and ask of Him the remedies: show to Him Who upbraids not but heals. And even if thou keep silence, He knows all things. Speak then that thou mayest profit. Speak in order that, putting off here all thy sins, thou mayest go forth clean and freed from thy transgressions, and mayest escape that intolerable publication.”<sup>1</sup>

Repudia-  
tion of the  
Asian  
system.

At forty years of age, as the accepted teacher and orator of the Christians of Antioch, Chrysostom has no hesitation in denouncing a public humiliation before the congregation as “that intolerable publication.” He speaks as of a procedure which is not practised in Antioch, but of which all his hearers have knowledge. He is presumably rejecting the penitential system of the Asian provinces. His words might be understood as implying that the intolerable publication of which he speaks involved that public confession in words before the congregation, which has so often on inadequate grounds been assumed as the practice of the ancient Church. Yet even here this is by no means to be certainly inferred. For the grades of penance, and the terms assigned, often made fairly clear to the curious what the offence must have been; and even when this was not so they still constituted a publication “intolerable” enough. It will perhaps be thought that at any rate the exhortation to unroll the conscience to GOD definitely puts aside all sacerdotal intervention. But this again is no matter of certainty. In the passages which are yet to be cited it will be noticed that when Chrysostom speaks of confession he repeatedly unites with it a note of place. The penitent is to go to the church,<sup>2</sup> and confess his sins to GOD, and receive forgiveness. So in the present passage he says “that putting off here (*ἐνταῦθα*) all thy sins, thou mayest go forth (*ἐκεῖ*) clean and freed from thy transgressions.”<sup>3</sup> If this is taken in connexion with (1) Chrysostom’s recognition of the power of the priesthood to bind and loose, and (2) the existence at this time at Constantinople of a priest penitentiary, to whom confession was privately made in the church, the indication of *the church* or *here* may possibly indicate a similar practice at Antioch.

Confession  
in the  
church.

<sup>1</sup> *De incomprehensibili Dei natura*, Hom. 5.

<sup>2</sup> E. g. *De Pœnitentia*, Hom. 2.

<sup>3</sup> What is exactly the antithesis of *ἐνταῦθα* and *ἐκεῖ*? Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* opposes *ἐνταῦθα* in the sense of *in this material world* to *ἐκεῖ* in the sense of *in the ideal world* (I. 9, 7 *al.*). It is possible that Chrysostom also is employing the words without local significance.

Chrysostom's teaching makes for the liberty of the penitent.

At the same time Chrysostom's teaching is all in the direction of greater liberty for the penitent. He will be found teaching again and again that there are methods of penance alternative to any confession, and that these are efficacious; and it may be inferred that he did not regard any confession public or private, as *necessary* to forgiveness. The same wave of feeling was in progress at Constantinople, as would shortly be shown by the abolition of the office of priest penitentiary by Nectarius.

*De Lazaro.*

In the same year (A.D. 387) in which Chrysostom preached the homilies against the Anomœans, he also preached another set of homilies usually styled *De Lazaro*. In the fourth of these he has a passage which has been a good deal cited in the controversy regarding the practice of confession.

The public system not essential.

“Again, if we have been negligent to this extent, it is for us to kill again the sin which has gone forth into act by *exomologesis* and tears, by the accusation of ourselves. For nothing is so destructive to sin as accusation and condemnation with *μετάνοια* and tears. Hast thou condemned thy sin?; thou hast put off thy burden. And who says this? GOD Himself the Judge. ‘Tell thou first thy sins that thou mayest be justified.’ For why art thou ashamed, and blushest to say thy sins, tell me: for sayest thou them to man that he should blame thee; confessest thou to thy fellow-servant, that he should proclaim it? It is to the Lord, to Him who cares for thee and is kind to thee: to the Physician, thou showest thy wound. . . . ‘I do not compel thee,’ He says, ‘to come into the midst of the theatre, and to produce many witnesses: to Me alone tell thy sins privately, that I may heal thy wound and relieve thy pain.’”

It has already been said that Chrysostom must be counted as on the side of liberty for the penitent. But so far as this passage is concerned, the designed contrast is with the publication of offences in the midst of the theatre before many witnesses; a publication before fellow-servants who would proclaim the confession. It is, in fact, a contrast with the public system of penance in the Asian provinces.

*De Beato Philogonio.*

Efficacy of five days' real penitence.

In the voluminous output of his active ministry, Chrysostom is found again and again insisting on the principles which he had indicated from the first. In the homily entitled *De Beato Philogonio*, also preached shortly after his ordination as priest, he affirms that five days' real penitence with fasting and prayer are enough to intercept a multitude of sins. Again, teaching that we are to meet past offences by the contrary virtues, he affirms that lapse of days or years is not needed; that one day may be enough. GOD asks no more for the forgiveness of sins than an entire resolve to forsake them.

*Concerning the Statues.*

Chrysostom's course of homilies known as *Concerning the*



*Statues* or *Ad Populum Antiochenum* was preached in A.D. 387 during a popular frenzy of apprehension. In a riot which followed on the announcement of fresh taxation, insults had been offered to the statues of the emperor Theodosius and of his deceased empress the revered Flacilla. Not without reason the city anticipated the severest penalties. Flavian the bishop, notwithstanding his advanced years, undertook the long journey of eight hundred miles to Constantinople to plead the cause of his people with the emperor. In Antioch itself Chrysostom preached these homilies in the Old Church to vast crowds of eager listeners, who applauded the passages which most impressed them. Chrysostom encourages and comforts, but exhorts to much reformation. Luxury and avarice, slander and evil speaking, and, above all, the constant use of profane oaths call for amendment. Incidentally he makes some allusions of interest on the subject of Penance. He says of Flavian's mission to the emperor that

"he will be able to persuade this most mild and merciful emperor. For if he (Flavian) hath received authority to loose sins committed against GOD, much more will he be able to take away and blot out those which have been committed against a man."<sup>1</sup>

A bishop's  
authority  
to loose.

At forty, then, Chrysostom holds a no less strong opinion as to the authority of the priesthood to loose sins than he had held in the earlier days when he wrote the treatise *On the Priesthood*.

Another passage has some bearing on the office of the priest. Exhorting that charity should take the place of detraction, he says:—

"Show thy charity towards the sinner. Persuade him that it is from care and anxiety for his welfare, and not from a wish to expose him, that thou puttest him in mind of his sin. . . . Show the wound to the priest; that is the part of one who cares for him, and provides for him, and is anxious on his behalf."<sup>1</sup>

"Show the  
wound to  
the priest."

This is a passage with regard to which there has been some controversy. Montfaucon, the learned Benedictine editor, sees here an indication of private confession to the priest, while other scholars have denied this. It is indisputable that Chrysostom was opposed to the imposition of an "intolerable publication." It is also clear from the passage last cited that he held strong views at this very time as to the absolving powers of the priesthood. Taking these facts in connexion with the contemporary practice of private confession to the penitentiary at Constantinople, and in connexion also with Chrysostom's exhortations to confession in the church in *μετάνοια*,<sup>2</sup> there seems to be some ground to support the contention that private confession to the priest in the church was possible and open to the penitent.

Was private  
confession  
practised?

<sup>1</sup> *Ad Populum Antiochenum*, Hom. 3.      <sup>2</sup> *De Pœnitentia*, Hom. 2.

"Let him remain outside."

In the twentieth of these homilies a passage occurs which has sometimes been pointed to as an indication of penitents outside the church, that is to say of *Mourners*, *προσκλαιόμενοι*. Towards the end of Lent Chrysostom exhorts his hearers to examine themselves with a view to their Easter communions.

"Let every one, therefore, consider with himself what defect he hath corrected, what good work he hath attained to; what sin he hath cut off, what stain he hath purged away; in what respect he hath become better. And should he discover that in this good traffic he have made any gain by the fast, and be conscious in himself of much care taken of his wounds, let him draw near. But if he have remained negligent, having nothing to show but mere fasting, and have done nothing which is right besides, let him remain outside; and then let him enter, when he hath purged out all these offences." <sup>1</sup>

Whatsoever may have been the practice of the church of Antioch as regards definite penitents, it seems most reasonable to understand this passage as simply counselling abstention from communion. He is speaking to his Christian hearers who have been listening to his course of homilies. If on self-examination their consciences approve let them draw near: if their sins be not amended let them stay away. The exhortation is parallel with that of our own Prayer Book: "repent you of your sins . . . or else come not to that Holy Table."

Alternative modes of penance.

In declining to accept the obligation of long terms of penance, or of exactly defined modes or grades of penitential observance, Chrysostom feels called upon to indicate in what other ways penitence may find effectual expression, and obtain forgiveness. He, in fact, constructs a system of his own. *Μετάνοια*, penance or penitence, is open after Baptism for all sins. It does not find expression by one mode only, but by several, and these are exchangeable or alternative, so that if a sinner shrink from adopting one such mode, he may employ another, and still find forgiveness.

Chrysostom's repeated teaching of alternative modes.

In repeated statements of these modes Chrysostom indicates the following: (1) confession, (2) contrition, (3) humility, (4) almsgiving, (5) prayer, (6) forgiveness of others. Sometimes only some of these are stated: while in his last recorded enumeration, that in the homilies on the epistle to the Hebrews, the enumeration is diffuse, and includes several other features of the Christian life. But it may be said that in Chrysostom's teaching there is a general consistency and agreement of statement; and that this teaching constitutes a theory of penance and absolution which is in fact peculiar to Chrysostom himself. Chrysostom was not indeed the first Christian writer to indicate a variety of means

<sup>1</sup> *Ad Populum Antiochenum*, Hom. 20.



of forgiveness. Origen had distinguished seven modes of remission. They were (1) Baptism, (2) Martyrdom, (3) almsgiving, (4) forgiveness of others, (5) conversion of sinners, (6) fulness of love, and (7) Penance. The rigorist attitude of Origen had, however, made his appreciation of these various modes of remission very different from that now expressed by Chrysostom. For Origen there had only been two of these modes which availed for the capital sins, which were otherwise "incurable." These were Baptism and Martyrdom. Of the remainder almsgiving, forgiveness of others, conversion of sinners, and fulness of love were effectual for the remission of minor sins which may be called venial. The remaining mode, Penance, was suited to sins of an intermediate character; sins of real gravity, but yet not of capital heinousness. Chrysostom's broad and modern conception of the readiness of GOD to forgive all sins, great or small, involved a totally different view of the practical employment of the various modes of remission. He withdraws no sins from the operation of his modes, which are regarded as alternative in their efficacy for sins generally; so that the widest possible door is thrown open for the return of every kind of offender. Reference may now be made to Chrysostom's enumerations in detail. In the third of the homilies *De Diabolo Tentatore*, at the end, we find the following passage :—

In the  
*De Diabolo  
Tentatore.*

"Do you wish me to mention the modes of penitence (*μετανοίας*). They are many, various, and diverse, and all lead to heaven. The first way of *μετάνοια* is *Condemnation of sins*. Do thou first say thy sins that thou mayest be justified; wherefore also the prophet said, 'I said, I will accuse against myself my sin to the Lord, and Thou forgavest the wickedness of my heart.' Do thou therefore condemn those things in which thou hast sinned: this sufficeth the Master for excuse, for he that condemns his sin will be less ready to fall into the same again. Move thine own conscience as an accuser within, that thou mayest not have an accuser there at the judgment seat of Christ. This, then, is one most excellent mode of *μετάνοια*, and there is a second not inferior to it, not to have malice against our enemies, to control our wrath, to *forgive* the offences of our fellow-servants; for thus shall be forgiven us those offences also committed against the Master. Behold, then, a second purification of sins. For 'if ye forgive,' saith He, 'your debtors, your heavenly Father will forgive you.' Dost thou wish to learn a third way of *μετάνοια*? *Prayer* fervent and definite, and this to be made from the depth of the heart. Sawest thou not that widow, how she constrained the shameless judge? But thou hast a Master, who is clement and favourable, and benevolent. She too asked against her enemies, but thou askest not against thine enemies, but for thine own salvation. Again, if thou wilt learn a fourth mode, I will say *Almsgiving*; for this has much

and unspeakable force. For even to Nebuchadnezzar who had experience of every kind of wickedness, and reached every impiety, Daniel says: 'O king, let my counsel please thee; redeem thy sins by alms and thine offences by compassion for the poor.' What could be equal to this benevolence? After innumerable sins, after so many transgressions he promises to forgive the offender, if he will be merciful to his fellow-servants. Also to be modest and *humble* does not less do away the nature of sins than all these (modes) which have been mentioned. Of this the publican is a witness, who had no deeds of righteousness to enumerate, but in place of all of them offered humility, and thereby put off the heavy burden of his sins.

"See, we have indicated five ways of *μετάνοια*, the first the *Condemnation of offences*, the second the *Forgiveness* of sins to our neighbours, the third that which comes from *Prayer*, the fourth that from *Almsgiving*, the fifth that from *Humility*. Be not, therefore, slothful, but walk in all these every day, for the paths are easy, and thou canst not put forward poverty as an excuse; for even if thou livest destitute of all things, still thou canst put aside wrath and practise humility, and pray continually, and condemn thy sins, and nowhere in all this is poverty a hindrance. And what am I here saying? For neither is that mode of *μετάνοια*, in which possessions are to be expended—I speak of Almsgiving—not even here does poverty hinder us from complying with the command. The widow who cast in the two farthings made this clear. Having then learned the healing of our wounds, let us perseveringly apply these remedies, so that, having returned to true health we may enjoy the Holy Table with boldness and with much glory may meet Christ the King of glory, and may obtain everlasting benefits by the grace, mercy, and benevolence of Jesus Christ our Lord, by Whom and with Whom be glory, power and honour to the Father together with the all holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and for ages of ages. Amen." <sup>1</sup>

The passage is worthy of study. Five modes of *μετάνοια* are indicated: (1) self-accusation, (2) forgiveness of our neighbours, (3) prayer, (4) almsgiving, (5) humility. These are represented as exchangeable or alternative. And inasmuch as the cast-iron method of the neighbouring churches of Asia Minor allowed no such choice, it will hardly be a mistaken inference which sees in this clear and detailed statement a condemnatory reference to that method. The modern theologian will indeed doubt if Chrysostom has sufficiently guarded his statement. For instance, it will hardly be contended that the confession, or the almsgiving, of a man who declines to forgive his neighbour, will be accepted as availing. Yet this would seem to follow if Chrysostom's statement of the modes as exchangeable were strictly applied.

<sup>1</sup> *De diabolo tentatore*, Hom. 2.



Chrysostom, however, expresses the hope that the true penitent will employ all the modes and employ them daily.

In the homilies styled *De Pœnitentia*, a series of addresses of uncertain date, Chrysostom expounds his system at considerable length. *Μετάνοια* despoils the devil of much prey; of the harlot, of the publican, of the thief, of the blasphemer. Four modes of *μετάνοια* are enumerated. Of these the first is *Confession*; a confession to make which the sinner will enter the church. "Why do we not each day frequent the church, embracing τὴν μετάνοιαν? And if thou be a sinner, enter into the church that thou mayest say thy sins"; "Hast thou sinned? enter into the church, and say to GOD, I have sinned."<sup>1</sup> The second mode is the mode of mourning or *Contrition*. "Hast thou sinned, mourn and thou loosest thy sin." The third mode is *Humility*. "I have mentioned several ways of *μετάνοια* in order that by the variety of the ways I may render salvation easy to thee. What is this third way? Humility." In the next homily, or *Almsgiving*, he says:—

"If GOD gave us one only way of *μετάνοια* we should cast it from us, saying: 'We cannot undertake thee, we cannot be saved.' But now, cutting away from thee this excuse, He has given thee not one way only, or a second, or a third, but many and different, so that by the abundance of them He may make thine ascent to heaven easy to thee. . . . Art thou a sinner, enter into the church, say I have sinned, and Thou hast loosed the sin; then we indicated a second way, to mourn for sin . . .; then we gave a third way of *μετάνοια*, and brought into our midst from the Scriptures the pharisee and the publican. . . . Let us now come to the sequel, and bring forward a fourth way of *μετάνοια*. And what is this? I speak of Almsgiving, the Queen of Virtues."

In these homilies Chrysostom does not seem to indicate with distinctness any further modes of penance.

In the 28th Homily on S. John (c. A.D. 389) Chrysostom teaches that sins committed after Baptism are graver and incur graver penalty than if they had been committed before Baptism. Yet for these sins the doors of *μετάνοια* are open, and "they may be washed away in various ways." It will be seen that the remission of sins in "various ways" is throughout the teaching of S. Chrysostom.

In the 4th Homily on 2 Corinthians (A.D. 392) he says that a contrite and humbled heart fulfils the requirements of penitence.

"For he had a contrite and a humbled heart, which most of all wiped away his sins: for this is exomologesis, this is *μετάνοια*."

<sup>1</sup> Hom. 2.

Again :—

“ Groan when thou sinnest not because thou art going to be punished, for this is nothing; but because thou didst offend so clement a Lord, Who so loved thee, and made so great account of thy salvation, as to give His Son for thee. For this groan, and continuously, for this (groaning) is exomologesis.”

In the same homily he gives rapidly a list of “ medicaments ” which will be seen to be a summary statement of his various modes of penance. “ Enumerate now the medicaments which heal thy wounds, and apply them all continuously; humility, exomologesis, the avoidance of detraction, thanksgiving in adversity, charity by substance and by acts, constant prayer.”

Chrysostom does not allow any one mode to be indispensable.

S. Chrysostom's characteristic teaching of the many modes of *μετάνοια*, so often repeated in his homilies, must be taken as not only denying the monopoly of one particular mode like that of the grades of penance in the Asian churches, but as in effect denying that any one mode is indispensable. He does not seem to insist on contrition, or on confession, or on forgiveness of our neighbours, if some other mode of *μετάνοια*, as humility, or prayer, or almsgiving, be undertaken. He is, however, far from asserting that two or more of the modes cannot co-exist, and it will be noticed that in the present passage he exhorts his hearers to apply all the “ medicaments ” he specifies, and to apply them all continuously. It will be remembered that he gave a similar recommendation in the *De diabolo tentatore*.

The same teaching at Constantinople.

*Homilies on the Hebrews.*

The utterances of S. Chrysostom after his removal to Constantinople are no longer evidence of the mind of the church of Antioch, but two passages may be cited here as showing the continuance of Chrysostom's convictions on the subject of the various modes of penitence. The homilies on the epistle to the Hebrews, which were published after Chrysostom's death, and without his corrections, were delivered at Constantinople. In the sixth of these homilies he again gives a list of alternative, or at any rate various, methods of *μετάνοια*. It is a fuller list than those of earlier years. The methods enumerated are as follows :—

1. Condemnation and accusation of the fault.
2. Humility (with confession).
3. Prayer.
4. Almsgiving.
5. Forgiveness of others.
6. Conversion of the brethren from their wandering.
7. Recourse without reserve to the priests (τὸ πρὸς τοὺς ἱερεῖς ἔχειν οἰκείως). “ And if any have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.”
8. Caring for the oppressed.
9. Avoidance of anger, and meekness of endurance.



Here the order is Chrysostom's, but it is not quite easy to arrive at the exact number of alternative methods, or methods which in Chrysostom's view might be separately efficacious. In the above list the mode numbered 5, forgiveness of others, is taken to cover Chrysostom's words, "not to be angry, not to detract, to forgive to all their offences"; and the mode numbered 9 is taken to cover at once the avoidance of anger, and meekness of endurance. Again, it does not appear that this last mode, 9, is really distinct from 5, the forgiveness of others. It may be that some muddle is due to the reporter. Perhaps the most interesting item of the list is 7. If it be right to understand *οἰκείως* as meaning *without reserve, familiarly, in intimate relations*, this method amounts to private confession to a priest. That Absolution through the priest is in Chrysostom's mind appears from the quotation from S. James: "And if any have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." This is the more remarkable, that the homilies were preached at Constantinople several years after the office of priest penitentiary had been abolished in that church. The inference may perhaps be drawn that with Chrysostom's approval *any* priest might be approached for such confession and absolution.

Confession  
to a priest.

This after  
the aboli-  
tion of the  
priest peni-  
tentiary.

The other Constantinopolitan utterance to which reference may here be made occurs in the *Adversus Catharos* :—

In the  
*Adversus  
Catharos*.

" . . . If we enter the church, if we groan for our trespasses, if we confess our sins, if we do alms, if we pronounce prayers, if we assist the oppressed, if we forgive our enemies their offences, if we weep for our own offences : for all these are the medicaments of sins."

Returning now to the homilies preached at Antioch reference may next be made to the homily headed *Non esse ad gratiam concionandum*. Commenting on the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Chrysostom insists on the uselessness of penitence beyond the grave.

*Non esse ad  
gratiam  
concionan-  
dum.*

"What then? Was his penitence of any avail? Did any gain result from his compunction? In no wise, for the penitence was out of time. The theatre was dissolved, the trenches<sup>1</sup> were gone; it was no longer the time of the contest. On this account I exhort and pray and entreat you that here you must lament and bewail your offences."

No place  
for peni-  
tence  
hereafter.

In this conviction Chrysostom undoubtedly expresses the common mind of early Christianity. There was place for a revision of the sentence after death: there was none for repentance, if that had not found place here.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The sanded trenches in which wrestlers engaged.

<sup>2</sup> The contrary suggestion in the *Shepherd* of Hermas may, however, be recalled (*Vis.* iii. 7).

*Homilies on  
Genesis.*

For the homilies on Genesis preached at Antioch Tillemont suggests A.D. 395 as the probable date, but others have thought them earlier. In Homily 30 Chrysostom enumerates fitting exercises for the end of Lent, "the great week." There should be fasting and prayer, "the showing (*ἐπιδείξασθαι*) the full and accurate exomologesis of sins, with sedulity in good works, liberal almsgiving, equity, clemency, and all other virtue." Such should be the preparation for Easter, the "day of the Lord." Farther on in the same homily :—

*Confession  
of sins in  
Lent.*

"For (the enemy) knows that at that time we can obtain much healing, if we deal with those things which concern us, and confess our sins, and show our wounds to the physician."

*Is the con-  
fession to  
a priest?*

Whether in these passages we are to understand any sort of formal confession to a priest, or simply a private acknowledgment to the Divine Physician, is not clear. It should be borne in mind that by this time the office of priest penitentiary may have been swept away at Constantinople. The action of Nectarius took place in A.D. 392. But even at Constantinople, as has been seen, this did not preclude the resort of the sinner to some priest.

*De Davide  
et Saule.*

*Of excluded  
persons who  
yet come to  
commu-  
nion.*

In Homily 3, *De Davide et Saule* (c. A.D. 387), Chrysostom indicates in an interesting passage the function of the priesthood in expelling from communion as a measure of discipline, and the shamelessness of some persons who presented themselves in spite of such action. He contrasts these with the obedient.

"For they who have been expelled according to the laws of GOD, and remain outside, have good hopes : for if they will correct the offences, on account of which they fall out of the Church, they will be able to come up again with a pure conscience. But they who, having defiled themselves, were bidden not again to approach till they had cleared off the stain of their sins, and then acted shamelessly, these make the wound more serious and the sore greater. For the sin is not so serious as the shamelessness after the sin and the disobedience to the priests who thus order."

The offence for which the priests are here represented as prepared to suspend from communion is attendance at the lascivious exhibitions of the theatre. Since, however, they were so prepared, and suspension from communion was enjoined, it is not a little curious to find, as seems to be implied, that if the persons would not accept the penalty, but presented themselves for communion, they were permitted to communicate. Perhaps it is to be understood that the excommunication pronounced was *lata sententia*, and that the persons affected by it were not known to the clergy.

*Homilies  
on S.  
Matthew.*

The valuable homilies on S. Matthew, which are some of Chrysostom's best and most mature work, were preached at



Antioch somewhere in Chrysostom's fifth decade. It was at the close of A.D. 397 that Chrysostom became patriarch of Constantinople. He was then fifty years of age. These homilies, which carry no precise indication of date, will fall somewhere in the preceding ten years. In Homily 10 he says that

“the opportunity of exomologesis is at once for the uninitiated, and for the baptized: for the former that, having repented, they may attain to the Holy Mysteries; for the latter that, having washed away the stain after Baptism they may with a pure conscience approach the Table.”

Twofold  
exomolo-  
gesis.

In the same homily lower down he teaches that *μετάνοια* should cover not merely the forsaking of sin, but the practice of acts of the contrary virtue.

“‘Bring forth,’ he says, ‘fruits worthy of repentance.’ How shall we do this? If we practise the opposites. For example. Didst thou take thy neighbour's goods? Henceforth give even thine own. Didst thou for a time commit fornication? Refrain even from thy wife on appointed days: practise self-restraint.”

In the 19th Homily Chrysostom employs an interesting argument to prove that *μετάνοια* is open after Baptism. The Lord's Prayer includes a petition for forgiveness; and the Lord's Prayer is for the use of the faithful.

“For that this prayer is proper to the faithful is taught both by the laws of the Church, and by the preamble of the prayer. For the uninitiated could not call God his Father. If therefore the prayer is proper to the faithful, and these pray, making supplication that sins may be forgiven them, it is clear that neither after the laver has the profit of *μετάνοια* been removed. For if He did not wish to indicate this, He would not have enjoined that we should pray in these terms.”

Argument  
from the  
Lord's  
Prayer.

In Homily 71 S. Chrysostom recalls the threefold prayer of the Liturgy, first for demoniacs, next for those in penitence (*ἐν μετανοίᾳ*), and thirdly for the faithful themselves. It should be borne in mind that these prayers of the Liturgy do not necessarily mean that either possessed persons or public penitents were in fact present in the congregation. A similar reference to this threefold prayer is to be found in Homily 18 on 2 Corinthians.

Prayer for  
penitents  
in the  
Liturgy.

In Homily 82 at the end, after addressing his audience on the subject of unworthy communions, he turns to the ministrant clergy (*τοὺς διακονομένους*) and warns them of their responsibility in communicating unfit persons.

Clergy  
responsible  
for com-  
municating  
the unfit.

“For it is necessary to address you also, that you may distribute these gifts with much care. No little punishment will be yours if, when you are aware of any wickedness in a person, you permit him to partake of this Table: his blood

will be required of your hands. Though he be a general, or a prefect, though he be he whose head is encircled with the diadem, and he approach unworthily, do thou hinder him : thou hast an authority greater than his."

It appears, then, that the ministering clergy were held not only to be justified in refusing communion, but to be under obligation to refuse it in the case of any person whomsoever, of whom they knew circumstances which rendered him unworthy. If this passage be compared with the passage quoted above from the homily *De Davide et Saule*, it will be seen to render it more probable that the persons there reproved for communicating were persons who had fallen under some general excommunication, the incidence of which would be unknown to the clergy. It was not the case that any might assume to communicate because the clergy were powerless.

Number  
of Chris-  
tians at  
Antioch.

It is in one of the later homilies on S. Matthew (Homily 85) that Chrysostom states that "by the grace of God those who assemble here fully reach the number of a hundred thousand." The words are usually understood as indicating the sum total of the persons in all the Christian congregations of Antioch. The fact of such extensive adherence to Christianity in the city of Antioch is of no little import in the history of penitential discipline. It is by itself sufficient to suggest the probability that harsh and repellent measures would here be impracticable.

*Homilies on  
Ephesians.*

Reproves  
non-com-  
municating  
attendants.

In the 3rd Homily on the epistle to the Ephesians (c. A.D. 396) Chrysostom has an interesting passage in which he reproves the practice of non-communicating attendance at the Holy Eucharist. It appears that by this time the practice had become common at Antioch. The introduction and growth of the practice may probably be assigned to the middle of the fourth century. Great multitudes were then pouring into the Church, and the possibilities of effective discipline were relaxed in every direction. Many persons communicated at Easter, but on ordinary occasions abstained.

Are they  
penitents?

"In this matter, I see much inconsistency. At other times ye do not approach, though on many occasions ye are pure, but at Easter, even if some offence has been dared by you, ye approach. Oh! what a custom! Oh! what presumption! In vain is the daily sacrifice; in vain we stand at the altar; there is no one to partake. I say this, not that ye should partake readily, but that ye should render yourselves worthy. Art thou not worthy of the *Sacrifice*, or of the *Partaking*. If so, then neither art thou of the *Prayer*. Thou hearest the herald (the deacon) as he stands and says: 'As many as are in *μετάνοια* all depart.' As many, then, as do not partake are in *μετάνοια*. If thou art of those in *μετάνοια* thou oughtest not to partake: for he who partakes not is of



those in *μετάνοια*. On whose account therefore he saith, 'Depart, ye who cannot supplicate,' but ye audaciously stand. But is it so that thou art not of these, but of those who may partake, yet carest nothing for it? Dost thou consider it of no account?"

It will be observed that S. Chrysostom's appeal is to the familiar words of the Liturgy rather than to the actual practice of the Antiochene church. The deacon announced: "All ye who are doing penance (*ὅσοι ἐν μετανοίᾳ*) depart." It is not unlikely that by this time in Antioch there were in practice few persons formally doing penance, and that, except perhaps in certain grave cases of notorious sin, no discipline was effectively exercised. But the time-honoured words of the Liturgy ordered the penitent away at the close of the *missa catechumenorum*, and Chrysostom implies that those who did remain had formerly been expected to communicate.

With this passage the references to S. Chrysostom's teaching in Antioch may be brought to an end. The evidence which that teaching affords may now be reviewed. First it will be noticed that it discloses a startling contrast of disciplinary practice between the church of Antioch and the church of the provinces of the Asian peninsula. In those churches a rigid system of long terms of penance distributed with careful precision over various grades of penitential observance was at this time generally in force. The canonical letters of S. Basil and of S. Gregory of Nyssa were contemporary in time with the utterances of S. Chrysostom. These letters were no mere theoretical expression of a desiderated discipline, but corresponded with the facts. They did not indeed assume to do more than give clear expression to the existing practice of the churches. But at Antioch, so far as the evidence goes, this rigid system of graded penance had never found place. It certainly found no place when Chrysostom was preaching. He attacks long terms of penance, publicity of penitential observances, and the rigid confinement of penitential satisfaction to particular grooves: but he attacks these methods of penance rather as something outside his audience than as practised by them. It is impossible to avoid the impression that he has all the time in his mind the Asian system which was in vigorous operation only a few miles away. In Antioch everything now points to what is in fact a dissolution of discipline. In a population of two hundred thousand persons there are one hundred thousand Christians, who attend the assemblies of the faithful, but who sit only loosely to the severer demands of their new creed. They listen gladly to the great Christian orator: but many of them are found to frequent more gladly still the games and contests of the arena, or the licentious exhibitions of the theatre. They communicate at Easter: but on ordinary days of assembly they

Contrast  
between  
Antioch  
and Asia.

Laxity  
at Antioch.

are present at the Mysteries without communicating. In brief, they have in a few years acquired several of the characteristic features of a modern Christian population. The tares mingle largely in the wheat, and have to be suffered to grow up with it till the harvest.

Chrysostom meets it.

It is to this condition of affairs that Chrysostom applies himself as a practical administrator. The methods of a past age, of a missionary region, of a straitly limited adherence, are not applicable to the Antioch he knows. Nor are they really admirable in themselves. Long terms of penance have no hidden virtue. Five days of contrition are worth years of wooden penalty. "Intolerable publication" repels, and is no requirement of God.

No long terms.

But *μετάνοια* a reality resulting in forgiveness.

So much for the destructive criticism of S. Chrysostom. But *μετάνοια* after Baptism is a reality, a penitence which results in forgiveness, in reconciliation with God. It covers the capital not less than the minor sins: and the forgiveness finds place in this life. This *μετάνοια* may take a considerable variety of form. Its exomologesis has various expressions. Not merely (1) confession, but (2) contrition, (3) humility, (4) almsgiving, (5) prayer, (6) forgiveness of others, are all efficacious for the absolution of our sins. Sometimes other modes are added.

Variety of modes.

It is this teaching which may be said to be the most characteristic teaching of S. Chrysostom on the subject of penance. There are many forms which penance may take, and they all reach up to heaven. Chrysostom repeats this teaching from the earlier utterances of his priesthood at Antioch to the latest pronouncements of his patriarchate at Constantinople. Every statement of it is a repudiation of the mechanical system of the Asian provinces.

Repeated penance open.

Also Chrysostom, more boldly than any of his contemporaries, takes up what may be called the modern position on the subject of repeated penitence and repeated forgiveness. Hermas in announcing the revelation of a special forgiveness had been careful to indicate that no repetition of it could be looked for. The generations which followed Hermas, while claiming for the Church continued access to the prerogative of mercy for the sinner after Baptism, did not in the case of the capital sins admit the individual penitent to more than one course of Penance with Absolution. If he fell again he was to be referred to the mercy of God at the great day. Here and there a timorous voice might plead for some extension of the prerogative of mercy. But it is Chrysostom who first throws limits to the winds. According to Sisinnius he stated that though a man should sin a thousand times he might repent a thousand times and still find forgiveness. There is no reason to doubt that the statement of Sisinnius is true, or sufficiently near the truth. A somewhat similar charge was not the least serious of the counts against Chrysostom which occupied the attention of the Synod of the Oak.

Opposition to Chrysostom on this point.

Office of the priesthood exalted.

Chrysostom thus takes up a position on the side of the liberty of the penitent, which in his own day was new and to many startling. But at no time does he disparage the office of the



priesthood, or its commission of binding and loosing. It might perhaps be suspected that in his early treatise *On the Priesthood* he expressed views which to his later judgment would smack of exaggeration. That in binding and loosing the priests of the Christian Church wielded an authority superior to that of angels and archangels, that they removed the leprosy of the soul, that in anointing the sick man they had authority to forgive his sins; these are among the statements of the *De Sacerdotio*. But later on, in his homilies *On the Statues*, he bases an argument on the accepted fact that the bishop, Flavian, had "received authority to loose sins committed against GOD." Again, the sinner is to be persuaded to "show his wound to the priest." Again, in the *De Davide et Saule* the priests are shown as suspending offenders from communion, and disobedience to them is "shamelessness." Notably, too, in his later years at Constantinople one of the modes of penitence which he enumerates is that of "recourse without reserve (*οἰκείως*) to the priests, so that, if any have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." And this in spite of the fact that the office of the priest penitentiary in that city had then been many years abolished.

Before leaving the Syrian circle of churches attention may be given to certain of the *Apostolical Canons*. Those canons are found appended to the eighth book of the *Apostolical Constitutions*, and for a long time obtained high consideration in the Eastern churches as being in fact apostolical, whereas the *Constitutions* were held to have been tampered with. Such was the judgment of the Trullan or Quinisext council of A.D. 692. Recent research has, however, attained some definite results. As a compilation the *Constitutions* are assigned to a Syrian compiler in the second half of the fourth century, or thereabouts. But the first six books of the *Constitutions* are now known to be based on the Syrian *Didascalia*, and so far as they reproduce the *Didascalia* their material belongs to the third century. It has accordingly found notice in a previous chapter of the present investigation. The *Canons*, which in their collected form are not earlier than the collected *Constitutions*, that is to say, the second half of the fourth century, are a compilation derived in part from the *Constitutions*, and in part from the canons of the councils of Nicæa (A.D. 325), of Antioch (A.D. 341), and possibly of Laodicea (c. A.D. 360). Particular canons may be much older than the date of the collection. The district of origin will be the same as that of the *Constitutions*: and this is generally agreed to be Syria.

The twenty-fourth of the *Apostolical Canons* is as follows:—

"A bishop, or priest, or deacon taken in fornication, or perjury, or theft is to be deposed, but not excommunicated: for, as the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not punish twice for the same offence.<sup>1</sup> Similarly the other clerks shall incur the same deposition."

Offending clergy to be deposed, but not barred from communion.

<sup>1</sup> Nahum i. 9 (LXX). Cf. *Can.* 32 of S. Basil.

This is the procedure as regards the discipline of the clergy which was in general acceptation, and which had already become familiar in the days succeeding the Decian persecution. They were deprived of office and placed among the lay people, but not subjected to public penance with its attendant exclusion from communion.

Various other of the *Apostolical Canons* pronounce on clerical offenders similar judgments of deposition. From canons 64 and 65 it appears that for the same offence a clerk was deposed and a layman repelled from communion and subjected to penance.

### 3. Constantinople.

The city  
of Con-  
stantinople.

It lacked  
antiquity.

Constantinople, in the fourth century the capital of the empire, differed notably from the other great centres of population such as Rome, or Antioch, or Alexandria, in this, that she lacked antiquity. She had succeeded to the authority of Rome as the capital city, and to the dignity of Rome as the seat of the imperial court. Her situation on the Bosphorus was unsurpassed in its loveliness. Her public edifices were splendid and imposing. But she had arisen only yesterday at the bidding of an emperor, and behind her lay no traditions, no precedents, no achievements, no history.<sup>1</sup> As in the secular, so in the ecclesiastical sphere. The church of Constantinople was a church without a past. Court pressure and Eastern deference might combine to pronounce her the see first in dignity after the old Rome, but they could not give her memories of apostles, or long rolls of bishops, or shrines of martyred saints.

On the 11th May, A.D. 330, the new capital had been solemnly inaugurated. A mongrel population of adventurers and place-hunters, of traders and mechanics, of freedmen and slaves, had found their way by sea and land from every quarter of the empire, and were now filling the streets of the splendid city, and gazing in astonishment at one another. The Greek element, however, predominated, and the Greek language prevailed.

It was  
professedly  
Christian.

A further striking feature of difference between Constantinople and all other cities of the empire was that, from the outset, Constantinople was a professedly Christian city. No pagan deity might here find a home. No cult of Zeus or of Apollo; no worship of the imperial majesty; no sacrifice of beasts, or mystic oracle, or fateful augury might here prepare a seat. And in accordance with this definite intention of the imperial founder, the city which knew no temples was from the first a city of churches. Elsewhere by A.D. 330 Christians had built but few enduring structures, and had indeed hardly dared as yet to assume freely the security of tenure which translates itself into stone: but in Constantinople side by side with the secular edifices had risen tier by tier churches

<sup>1</sup> Byzantium preceded Constantinople: but it would be a mistake to speak of Constantinople as a development of Byzantium.



of no little splendour at the imperial charge. Socrates particularises two, the Irene, or church of Peace, and the church of the Apostles. A church of the Holy Wisdom appears also to have been among the churches of Constantinople, but it was not yet the glorious structure of Justinian.<sup>1</sup>

But it is easier to stamp conviction on the stones of a city than in the hearts of men. The population which filled Constantinople was for the most part not unwilling to bear the Christian name. It was another matter to bear the Christian yoke. It would seem that at no time was it ever found really practicable to impose a serious code of Christian discipline on the church of the capital city. Five years before the solemn inauguration of Constantinople the great Council of Nicæa in the neighbouring Asiatic province had adopted canons which purported to impose generally the system of graded penance familiar in the provinces of Asia. But it may well be doubted if any such procedure ever found a foothold in Constantinople.

No serious  
code of  
Christian  
discipline.

It was in this great city, imperial, populous, wealthy, and by outward profession Christian, that an event occurred about the year A.D. 391, that is to say, some sixty years after the foundation of the city, which constitutes one of the landmarks in the history of Penance. The patriarch Nectarius abolished the office and functions of the priest penitentiary. Two of the Church historians, Socrates and Sozomen, give an account of the circumstances. Their narratives raise queries which are not easy to answer. Also in some important particulars, they do not agree with one another. On the whole, however, certain main facts of importance will be found to emerge.

Nectarius  
abolishes  
the priest  
peniten-  
tiary.

Of the two historians Socrates appears to have been the earlier writer in point of time, and is probably the more accurate and trustworthy. He was born at Constantinople in A.D. 408, and had lived all his life in the city. He was a Christian layman, a lawyer, and he shows an impartial temper; a temper so impartial, indeed, as regards the Novatianists, that he has been suspected of being a Novatianist himself. Sozomen, also a layman, and also a lawyer, was born about A.D. 400 at a small town named Bethelia, near Gaza in Palestine. He came to Constantinople as a young man and became a resident of the city. No doubt he had the pages of Socrates in his hands when he sat down to write his history. He appears to have been conscientious and painstaking, but inferior in judgment to Socrates. It should not, however, be forgotten that Sozomen had it in his power to consult living persons who were contemporary with the events narrated; and also, that while he may have been inferior to

Socrates  
and  
Sozomen.

<sup>1</sup> At a later period there were some four hundred churches. Paspates reckons 392, Ducange 428, Gedeon 463 (Grosvenor, E. A., *Constantinople*, I. 311).

The narra-  
tive of  
Socrates.

Socrates in acumen and judgment, there is nothing to show intentional inaccuracy or dishonesty of statement.

Let the narrative of Socrates be taken first :—

“ At the same time it seemed good also to abolish the priests of the churches who were appointed over Penance (ἐπὶ τῆς μετάνοιας) and for the following cause. From the time when the Novatianists separated from the Church because they were unwilling to communicate with those who had lapsed in the Decian persecution, the bishops by the ecclesiastical rule appointed in addition the priest penitentiary, in order that those who had fallen into sin after Baptism might render exomologesis for their sins in the hands of this presbyter so appointed. This rule is still in force in the other sects. Only those of the Homoousian conviction, and the Novatianists, who are of one mind with these as regards the faith, have rejected the priest penitentiary. Novatianists indeed did not receive this addition at the beginning. But those who now control the churches, having maintained the office for a considerable time laid it aside in the time of Nectarius the bishop, some such affair as this following having happened to the Church. A certain woman of well-born stock had recourse to the priest penitentiary : and she confesses specifically the offences which she had committed after Baptism. The presbyter enjoined upon the woman to fast, and to make continuous prayer, in order that with the confession (ὁμολογία) she might have to show some work worthy of penance. But the woman proceeding accused herself of another sin, for she said that a deacon of the church had lain with her. This statement led to the expulsion of the deacon from the church. The people were greatly disturbed ; for they were indignant not only at what had occurred, but also because the occurrence brought abuse and scorn upon the Church. When in consequence men in holy orders were being torn to pieces (*i. e.* by abuse), a certain Eudæmon, a presbyter of the Church, by birth an Alexandrian, counsels the bishop Nectarius to abolish the priest penitentiary, and to permit each to partake of the Mysteries as his own conscience guides, for that thus only could the Church be free from obloquy. I have ventured to relate this in this history, for I heard the circumstances from Eudæmon. For, as I have often said, I have spared no pains to learn events from each of those who had knowledge, and to scrutinise carefully in order that I might write nothing beyond the truth. To Eudæmon I formerly said : ‘ Whether your counsel, O presbyter, has been profitable to the Church or otherwise, God knows.’ But I see that it afforded a pretext for not reproving one another’s faults, and for not observing that precept of the Apostle : ‘ Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.’ Concerning these matters let this be enough said.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Historia Ecclesiastica*, V. 19.



The following is the account which Sozomen gives of the circumstances :—

The narrative of Sozomen.

“At this time Nectarius, who governed the church of Constantinople, was the first to cease to provide the presbyter appointed over penitents. The bishops nearly everywhere followed his example. What this office is; whence it took its rise; and for what reason it was made to cease; are questions which are differently answered by different persons. I will reply to them as I understand the matter. Since, if man was not to sin at all there was needed rather a divine than a merely human nature, God authorised the accordance of pardon to the penitents even when they had sinned many times: and since, in seeking pardon it is necessary to confess the sin, and it appeared to the priests from the beginning, as is reasonable, that it was a thing burdensome for a person to confess his sins as in a theatre with the concourse of the church for witnesses, they appointed for this purpose a priest from those of the best conversation, a man silent and prudent. To him sinners coming confessed their deeds; and he, assigning a penance for the sin of each, whatsoever it was suitable that he should do or pay, absolved them, who were thus to work out their satisfaction by themselves. But for the Novatianists, with whom there is no provision for Penance (*μετάνοια*) nothing of this was needed. Among the other sects, however, the office even now prevails, and in the churches in the West it is carefully maintained, especially in that of the Romans.”

[Here follows a description of Penance as practised in the Roman Church, which will be found printed under the head of *Rome* on p. 405.]

“Now in the church of Constantinople the presbyter was appointed who is placed over the penitents. A certain woman of the upper class having been enjoined by this presbyter for sins which she had confessed to fast and to entreat God, remained for this purpose in the church. She made it known that she was there debauched by a certain deacon. On this becoming known to the people they were angry at such a desecration of the church. The greatest opprobrium overtook those in holy orders. Nectarius, being in difficulty as to what he should do under the circumstances, removed the paramour from the diaconate. And when some had counselled that he should concede that each person as his conscience permitted, and he was able to dare it, should so participate in the Mysteries, he suppressed the presbyter penitentiary. And from that time this settlement remained in force; for, as I opine, the ancient use and the severity and solemnity attaching to it had already begun to lapse little by little into an indifferent and careless habit. For in earlier days, as I suppose, sins were fewer (? less) both on account of the shame

of those who announced their own delinquencies, and of the severity of those appointed as judges in the matter.<sup>1</sup>

Discrepan-  
cies of the  
two narra-  
tives.

On comparing these two narratives it will be seen that Sozomen has added to the narrative of Socrates the important statement that the deacon and the penitent had committed their sin in the church, thus adding the offence of polluting the sacred building to the other offences of fornication, and the pollution of holy orders. Also the confession of the fornication formed no part of the original confession, as with Socrates, for the sin did not take place till after that confession was over and the penance assigned; a penance which involved a protracted stay in the church. Farther, Sozomen does not certainly say that the lady made known this offence in confession or to the priest penitentiary. He uses the word *κατεμήνυσεν*, *she made it known, gave information* that she had been debauched by a certain deacon, the turn of the phrase rather leaving the impression that she represented outside that she had been overborne by the deacon.

The priest  
peniten-  
tiary at  
Constanti-  
nople.  
Before the  
Decian  
persecu-  
tion bishops  
adminis-  
tered pen-  
ance.

The various points indicated in the narratives may now be taken in order. The first which calls for notice is the existence of a priest penitentiary at Constantinople. Before the Decian persecution the ordinary controller of formal penitence on behalf of the Church was the bishop, or the bishop with his clergy, so far as glimpses of such control have been available. Here for the first time is found deputed to exercise full authority in ordinary course a *priest penitentiary*. The historic occasion for the establishment of the office is stated by Socrates to have been the Novatianist schism. The Novatianists would not communicate with those who had lapsed in the Decian persecution, and separated themselves. From that time, according to Socrates, the bishops by the ecclesiastical rule appointed the priest who should be over the exercise of Penance (*ἐπὶ τῆς μετανοίας*) in order that those who had fallen after Baptism should make exomologesis for their sins in the hands of the presbyter appointed for the purpose. Batiffol points out that there is a real difference between this expression and that used by Sozomen, *τούτῳ τῷ πρεσβυτέρῳ ἐξομολογοῦνται*, which might mean only *they make confession to this priest*. The expression of Socrates covers more than this. The penitent is to make his exomologesis, which may include the whole course of Penance as well as the avowal of the sin, *ἐπὶ τούτου τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου* *in the hands of, or under the guidance of, this priest*.

After it a  
special  
priest  
appointed.

Under this  
priest the  
penitent  
accepted  
penance.

There was  
a confes-  
sion to the  
priest,

Next may be noticed the fact that whatsoever else the exomologesis might cover, it certainly did cover a confession to the appointed priest, and that a private confession. The more evidence is required for the alleged practice of public confession in the face of the congregation anywhere except in the cases condemned by S. Leo, the more shadowy such alleged practice becomes.

<sup>1</sup> *Historia Ecclesiastica*, VII. 16.



More will be said on this point farther on. Here at any rate the privacy of the confession appears to be clear. and that private.

Next it would seem that while the institution of a priest penitentiary is only certainly known to us at Constantinople, such institution was by no means confined to Constantinople. It dated from the time following the Decian persecution, that is to say, from about A.D. 252, or some eighty years before the inauguration of Constantinople: and it was adopted by the bishops of the churches then existing (not yet Constantinople). It may be assumed that such adoption has reference to bishops of the area within which Socrates had knowledge, an area of which Constantinople was the centre. He includes a reference to the church of Rome, but, as will be seen, the priests appointed with reference to Baptism and Penance by Marcellus (A.D. 307) and Simplicius (A.D. 468-483), though they probably heard confessions, do not appear to have superseded the bishop for the purpose of the solemn reconciliation. At Antioch, while S. Chrysostom has many references to the absolving power of the priesthood, and uses expressions which encourage the "showing of wounds," he appears to have no allusions to any definite office of priest penitentiary. There were priests penitentiary in other churches. The practice of Rome, and of Antioch.

One expression in the statement of Socrates is not very clear. He says that the bishops added the priest penitentiary τῷ ἐκκλησιαστικῷ κανόνι. This has most generally been taken to mean by the ecclesiastical rule, an interpretation which agrees with the next sentence, where it is said that οὗτος ὁ κανὼν, *this rule*, is still in force in the other sects. The rule, if such be the meaning, would presumably be a rule of custom. No such canon is found in the records of any council. Valois, the editor of Socrates, takes another view of the meaning of the expression τῷ ἐκκλησιαστικῷ κανόνι. He understands it as referring to the ecclesiastical roll, or *matricula*. The meaning would thus be that the bishops added the priest penitentiary to the ecclesiastical staff. This interpretation is attractive, but does not suit the phrase οὗτος ὁ κανὼν in the next sentence. Meaning of κανὼν.

Why was the attitude of the Novatianists in refusing communion to the lapsed the cause of the appointment of priests penitentiary? It is clear that so soon as the Church had decided to admit the lapsed to reconciliation the task of such admission would become a very serious one in populous centres, in view of the large numbers of the lapsed: and some additional provision for the exercise of the reconciling office of the Church might well be imperatively called for. But the fact that the Novatianists refused to admit the lapsed to reconciliation in their own body should have made the task of the Church neither less nor more. What then does Socrates mean? The answer appears to be that private recourse to the priest penitentiary was to take the place of the public exomologesis. Not merely was the confession of the fault to be private, but the whole course of the Penance was to be in the penitentiary's The office designed to avoid publicity.

hands, and would presumably in most cases be private also. In this way persons not notorious offenders would escape the fierce light of publicity which the atmosphere of controversy would involve in their cases if the character of their offence became known.

Sozomen  
no author-  
ity on  
publicity  
of con-  
fession.

Sozomen indeed makes a statement on this point which, if it were a duly grounded narrative of facts instead of an expression of opinion would go far to establish the publicity of confession in earlier times as well as the privacy of confession to the priest penitentiary. He puts forward the theory that the introduction of the office of the priest penitentiary came about because it was a thing burdensome for a person to confess his sins as in a theatre with the concourse of the church for witnesses. He is writing somewhere about two hundred years after the close of the Decian persecution when the office of priest penitentiary was instituted. In Constantinople certainly there had never at any time been any public confession of the sort indicated. Sozomen is, in fact, theorising in this matter just as any modern writer might theorise. If we ask for the source of his idea, his own phrase *ὡς ἐν θεάτρῳ* is the phrase of S. Chrysostom. S. Chrysostom used it presumably of the *exomologesis* of the Asian provinces, where it would appear that the *verbal* confession was not public.<sup>1</sup> Sozomen is, in fact, already falling into the endless confusion of later writers as to the meaning of the word *exomologesis*. He understands it of confession. It usually means rather the ordered course of penance, which was no doubt preceded by a confession; but the confession need not have been public as the penitential facts were public.

The par-  
ticular case.

The lady  
confesses in  
detail.

The priest  
assigns a  
penance of  
fasting and  
prayer.

The particular case of Penance may now be considered. It is of great interest as describing the course of a private confession in A.D. 391. The lady "confesses *κατὰ μέρος* the sins which she had committed after baptism." Some translate the phrase *κατὰ μέρος* *in part*, understanding that the stress is laid by Socrates on the imperfect character of the earlier confession. Perhaps the meaning is rather *in detail, specifically*, as opposed to any mere general statement of sinfulness. The confession, however, was not complete at the point where the priest seems to have understood that the woman had finished what she had to say. He accordingly proceeds to assign a work of satisfaction, a penance. The penitent is to fast, and to continue instant in prayer, "in order that with the confession (*ὁμολογία*) she might also have some work to show worthy of penitence." Thus the ordinary course of a confession included a detailed or specific statement of particular offences by the penitent, and the assignment by the priest of a simple but suitable penance of fasting and prayer without which the *μετάνοια* would be incomplete. The interview

<sup>1</sup> At least there was no public confession in the case of the adulteresses admitted by S. Basil's canon among the Bystanders. Presumably, therefore, there was no such confession by other penitents, since if there had been the case of the adulteress would have been marked by the difference.



is obviously private and confidential. The confession is made privately: the penance assigned is no less private. There is no relegation of the penitent to any grade or station of penitential observance: there is no indication of any task involving subjection to public observation. And if there had been nothing more, it may be understood that on the observance of the penance assigned the penitent would in the ordinary course have found absolution, and have been admitted to communion. In the present case, however, the confession was not at an end. The penitent had but paused, whether from shame or from whatsoever reason. When the priest's words were said, she proceeded with her confession. She now confesses that she has been guilty of sexual intercourse, fornication or adultery as the case may be, with a deacon of the church.

Socrates says she afterwards confessed fornication.

It has been noticed above that the narrative of Sozomen is different from that of Socrates in some important particulars. Which of the two narratives is the nearer to the truth? Batiffol, seeing in the narrative of Sozomen a mere amplification of Socrates, regards the placing of the offence in the church itself as a simple fabrication designed to render more intelligible the outcry against the clergy and against the office of the penitentiary which did in fact ensue. It may be so. It is certainly the case that Sozomen does employ and amplify the narrative of Socrates. His amplification includes the highly valuable description of the contemporary penitential observance of the church of Rome, which will be considered at length in the next section. This description is apparently derived either from personal observation or from the testimony of well-informed persons. The statement that the sin of the woman and the deacon took place in the church may also be derived from the testimony of persons no less well informed.

Points of difference in Sozomen.

In no case, however, does the action of Nectarius in abolishing the office of the priest penitentiary explain itself upon the surface. The offence was grave: but grave offences occurred. If a grave offence had been committed, and the Church had authority to reconcile the offenders when penitent, where was the difficulty in assigning a suitable penance, and in due course reconciling the offenders? What could ordinarily be less open to objection than a private confession to the priest penitentiary? When in some way the matter became known, and a scandal ensued, who was benefited, and what was mended, by abolishing the office of priest penitentiary?

Why did Nectarius abolish the penitentiary?

The fact that after the woman's confession, and apparently on the authority of that confession, the deacon was degraded, has been a difficulty to some students. In the modern usage of the Latin Church, as indeed among ourselves, the information imparted in private confession could not be used for public action without

The seal of  
confession.

what is technically called a breach of the seal. And may it not be said at once that where strict silence is a matter alike of honourable understanding and of Church order, any public use of the matter of a confession in the way indicated would be altogether wrong? But is it not a little premature to require this developed appreciation of the seal of confession in a penitentiary of A.D. 391? The office had been created, as it would seem, about a hundred and forty years previously, to take the place of a penitential system in which the acknowledgment of the penitent, probably private, had been followed by a course of penitential observance so utterly public as to "give away" the penitent in most cases to any who had suspicions. The actual relief as regards publicity must have been immense. Beyond that relief, however, there is nothing to show that the Church as yet undertook any obligation of entire secrecy. Where the penance required by the sin had in any way a public character it would probably be left to tell its tale. Where a second person was involved, and discipline as to that second person was called for, it may well be that the discipline was not withheld. In the present case the deacon was degraded from his office. The offence became known in connexion with the degradation, and a hurricane of vituperation overtook the clergy generally.

In the foregoing remarks the narrative of Socrates has been in view. If Sozomen's narrative be accepted, he does not certainly say that the offence with the deacon was reported by the woman in confession to the penitentiary at all.

Some have seen a cause of offence in the serious result to the deacon, a result which followed on the evidence of one witness, and that witness by admission a partner in the offence. Some, again, accepting Sozomen's account, have seen in the offence a result of the system which left the woman in the church to fulfil her penance and so subjected her to such scandalous possibilities.

What are the comments as to the ground of action which are made by the two narrators themselves, Socrates and Sozomen, who lived only half a century after the event? Socrates says: "The people were greatly disturbed, for they were indignant not only at what had occurred, but also because the occurrence brought abuse and scorn upon the Church." Eudæmon gave his counsel "when men in holy orders (*τῶν ἱερωμένων ἀνδρῶν*) were being torn to pieces" (*i. e.* by abuse). He counselled that every person should be permitted to partake of the Mysteries as his conscience indicated; "for that thus only could the Church be free from obloquy." Sozomen says that the abolition of the office "from that time remained in force; for, as I opine, the ancient use, and the solemnity and severity attaching to it had already begun to lapse little by little into an indifferent and careless habit."

The peni-  
tentiary  
was already  
only a  
survival.

There can be little doubt that these last words indicate the real explanation of the abolition of the office. It was already only a survival. When the new capital rose glorious by the Bosporus,



the ancient discipline never found in it a congenial home. The large influx of new adherents never owned or carried the ancient yoke. But, as in the neighbouring churches there had been provided since the days of the Decian persecution a priest penitentiary for the reconciliation of the lapsed, so a priest penitentiary had been provided at Constantinople not less than eighty years after the Decian persecution. To him betook themselves such as would; and probably no more. The ordinary Christian of the day, so far as can be gathered from such evidence as remains, was not concerned with him. "The ancient use, and the solemnity and severity attaching to it, had already begun to lapse into an indifferent and careless habit." Men, in fact, no longer practised the old discipline of Penance. Then there comes in A.D. 391 this scandalous occurrence. Where the time-honoured tribunal is resorted to, there the provisions of its discipline must be carried out. The deacon is degraded. The church is scandalised. The practical man represents that here is a tribunal which the Christian community as a whole neither use nor want, and which on the few occasions of its exercise may as likely lead to inconvenience as to benefit. Why not have done with it?

What is altogether clear is that if, as some have supposed, the practice of private confession had been universal or general in Constantinople before the suppression of the penitentiary, such practice could never have been abolished in a moment in the easy style suggested by Eudæmon and successfully adopted. So far as appears no opposition was aroused. No schism was evoked, no mutiny held, no protest made. And it is obvious that an institution which could be thus silenced by a word could not in practice have been of any great account. Some private expressions of opinion would no doubt find place. The comment of Socrates, a devout and sagacious Christian lawyer, is interesting. To Eudæmon the presbyter, who had suggested the suppression of the office, Socrates said: "Whether your counsel, O presbyter, has been profitable to the Church or otherwise, God knows." For his own part he evidently more than doubted it. But his demurring temper took no louder note.

If recourse to him had been general, his office could not thus have been abolished. No opposition aroused.

The comment of Socrates.

It has been noticed above that the appointment of priests penitentiary had not been confined to Constantinople. It had, in fact, been employed by various bishops after the Decian persecution about A.D. 252, or some eighty years before Constantinople was founded. So we learn from Socrates. Sozomen states that the example of Nectarius in abolishing the priest penitentiary was followed by the bishops nearly everywhere (*σχεδὸν οἱ πανταχοῦ ἐπίσκοποι*). Sozomen's area of observation may not have reached to a circumference very distant from Constantinople, but his words at least require it to be understood that some bishops, probably in the provinces around Constantinople, had priests penitentiary in their dioceses, and followed the example of

Example of Nectarius followed by other bishops.

Nectarius by abolishing them. The reason would presumably be the same in all cases; that the office was a mere survival of the penitential discipline, and that, as practised, it tended rather to give offence than to furnish edification.

Practice  
at Con-  
stantinople  
after the  
suppres-  
sion.

S. Chrysos-  
tom.

No effec-  
tive discip-  
line.

Homilies  
on the  
Hebrews.

Alterna-  
tive forms  
of *μετάνοια*.

Among  
them pri-  
vate re-  
course to  
the priest.

A few words may be added as to the practice of the church of Constantinople in the days which succeeded the suppression of the penitentiary's office. The date of this event was A.D. 391.<sup>1</sup> Nectarius died in A.D. 397 or 398. He was succeeded by S. John Chrysostom, who thus came upon the scene some seven years after the suppression of the priest penitentiary. It seems to be fairly clear that at no time during Chrysostom's episcopate was any effective system of Church discipline in force in Constantinople for the Christian population generally.

The homilies of Chrysostom<sup>2</sup> on the epistle to the Hebrews were preached by the great orator at Constantinople in these days of his episcopate. They were reported by a priest named Constantine, who published them from his notes after Chrysostom's death, and without Chrysostom's corrections. Some reference to these homilies has already been made in connexion with the teaching of S. Chrysostom. In the 6th Homily, repeating and indeed expanding his theory of several varying and alternative forms of *μετάνοια*, he enumerates not less than nine: (1) condemnation of the fault, (2) humility with confession, (3) prayer, (4) almsgiving, (5) forgiveness of others, (6) conversion of the brethren, (7) recourse to the priests, (8) caring for the oppressed, (9) avoidance of anger and meekness of endurance. In this wide liberty of return, it is clear that Chrysostom contemplates that for the most part the penitent will make his own peace with God. It is in a high degree interesting to note that he does not on that account exclude recourse to the priest, but gives this place as one of nine modes of *μετάνοια*. The exact phrasing, as was before noticed, is *τὸ πρὸς τοὺς ἱερεῖς ἔχειν οἰκείως*, where *οἰκείως* seems to indicate that the recourse to the priest will be of an intimate, familiar, or confidential character. And it is to be specially noted as regards Constantinople that this teaching was given some ten years after the suppression of the office of priest penitentiary. Chrysostom thus contemplated the penitent as having recourse to some priest who was not the penitentiary, perhaps to any priest of his choice. And such recourse was to be undertaken with a special view to the remission of sins which should follow it through the priestly intervention, for here Chrysostom quotes the words of S. James, "and if any have committed sins they shall be forgiven him."

In the 31st Homily Chrysostom seems only to have in view the recourse of the sinner to God.

<sup>1</sup> Socrates indicates the consulate of Tatian and Symmachus.

<sup>2</sup> I have thought it best to keep together all the selected passages from the works of S. Chrysostom. They will be found under *Antioch*.



“ Let us persuade ourselves that we have sinned ; let us not say it with the tongue only, but also with the mind ; let us not only call ourselves sinners, but let us enumerate our sins, recounting each specifically. I say not to thee, make a show of thyself, or accuse thyself to others, but I counsel thee to obey the prophet when he says : ‘ discover thy way to the Lord.’ Confess these things before GOD, confess the sins before the Judge, praying with the mind, if not with the tongue, and so become worthy to find mercy.”

In *Homily*  
31 recourse  
to GOD  
alone in  
view.

About A.D. 398 Chrysostom delivered the homily usually headed *Quod frequenter conveniendum sit*, in the church of the Martyrs at Constantinople, which was known as Ἐν παλαιᾷ πέτρᾳ. The following passage is an excellent example of his large-hearted spirit.

*Quod fre-*  
*quenter*  
*convenien-*  
*dum sit.*

“ Had I said, ‘ The covetous man, the extortioner, the fornicator, the adulterer, may not come to the church ’ ; and had I driven off and pursued all those in sins ; not even so would there be any excuse (*i. e.* for not coming to church) : for it would be their duty to be purified and come. But now I do not say this, but ‘ If you are a fornicator, or adulterer, if you are an extortioner or covetous, come to the church that you may learn to do such things no longer . . . come and be healed with me, for I also, the physician, have need of medicaments.’ ”

Wide  
invitation  
to sinners.

Notwithstanding the general relaxation of Christian discipline, it was not to be supposed that the wide liberty of penitence which Chrysostom had so long preached would escape hostile criticism, especially after his elevation to the patriarchate. Socrates records that whereas the decision of a synod of bishops had been that Penance was open once to those who had sinned after Baptism, Chrysostom had not scrupled to affirm Χιλιάκις μετανοήσας εἰσελθε, *Enter, though thou hast done penance a thousand times.* This utterance, says Socrates, brought reproof upon Chrysostom both from his own acquaintance, and from Sisinnius, the Novatianist bishop in Constantinople, who wrote a treatise to controvert it, and by so doing annoyed Chrysostom acutely. Chrysostom was indeed in such matters strangely irritable. The very existence of the Novatianist schism, which existed to combat the disciplinary indulgence of which Chrysostom was the foremost advocate, was a source of grave irritation to him. On one occasion he threatened to procure the silencing of the preaching of Sisinnius. On another he attacked the pretension conveyed in the name of Καθαροί, *Cathari, the pure*, which, as appears, was the name at this time affected by the Novatianists.

Hostile  
criticism.

“ A thou-  
sand times

Sisinnius,  
and the  
Novatian-  
ists.

“ What then is this folly, what this impudence, what this madness ? Being a man, dost thou call thyself pure, and persuade thyself that thou art pure ? Of how great insanity is such action an indication ? For when thou callest thyself

pure, thou doest the like as if one were to say that the sea is pure of waves. For as waves are never wanting to the sea, so sins are never wanting to us." <sup>1</sup>

The Synod  
of the Oak.

*The Synod of the Oak* (First of Chalcedon, A.D. 403), by which Chrysostom was deposed is not a synod which later Catholic tradition has regarded with much respect. Its convention was utterly irregular. The assumption of Theophilus that Alexandria was supreme over all Eastern sees had never found admission, and would never find it. The personal animosity entertained towards Chrysostom by Theophilus obviously went far to discredit all the proceedings of the synod which affected Chrysostom. Chrysostom himself felt this so strongly that he would not appear before the synod at all. "Remove my avowed enemies from your list of judges, and I am ready to appear, and make my defence, should any person bring ought against me: otherwise you may send as often as you will for me, but you will get no farther." <sup>2</sup>

No less than twelve of the sessions of the synod were, however, occupied with charges against Chrysostom. John, the deacon, his bitter enemy, appeared with a list of twenty-nine charges. Another list of eighteen charges was brought by Isaac, a bishop. Of these the seventh ran as follows:—

"He supplies fear-  
lessness to  
sinners."

"Seventh, that he supplies fearlessness to sinners, teaching thus: 'If thou sin again, repent again, and as often as thou sinnest, come to me and I will heal thee.'"

This charge, which Chrysostom would hardly have denied as to its main proposition that repeated forgiveness was open to the sinner, was one of three which were considered at length by the council, and it probably supplied one of the principal grounds of the condemnation which followed. Chrysostom was sentenced to deposition from his see, a sentence which was confirmed by a rescript of the emperor Arcadius, who imposed the penalty of life-long banishment. The banishment was given effect to; but Chrysostom was soon recalled. In the following year, however, a final banishment was carried out, and the death of the great patriarch quickly followed.

The more  
rigorist  
Catholics  
really  
aggrieved.

The historians who assign the banishments and sufferings of Chrysostom mainly to personal animosities are amply supported by the evidence. At the same time it can hardly be doubted that in spite of the decay of actual discipline in Constantinople, all that large section of the Catholic community which shared something of the Novatianist temper would be really aggrieved by Chrysostom's teaching as to repeated Penance. It is hard to reconstruct the temper of a past age. But Chrysostom was a foremost modernizer of his day. His teaching as to Penance was revolutionary. If he found enthusiastic adherents, he aroused

<sup>1</sup> Hom. 6, *Adversus Catharos*.

<sup>2</sup> *Acta (ex Photii bibliotheca)* in Mansi, III. 1145.



no less an impassioned hostility. His tragic end, if it be rightly connected with the personal animosities of Eudoxia and Theophilus, may be not less really related to the large volume of opposition which was aroused by his teaching in the matter of penitence.

#### 4. *Alexandria.*

Among the Eastern churches the great church of Alexandria with its multitude of subordinate sees holds a conspicuous place. In the third century Clement of Alexandria and Origen had both stood on the whole for the sterner tradition which refused to admit to reconciliation offenders in the three capital sins of idolatry, impurity, and bloodshed. Dionysius, styled by Eusebius "the great bishop of Alexandria," had in the period following the Decian persecution written with approval of the reconciliation of the lapsed Sarapion before his death. It would thus appear that the church of Alexandria had then advanced with the rest of Christendom on the path of concession.

Fifty years later (A.D. 306), after the persecution under Diocletian, Peter, then archbishop of Alexandria, in the little group of disciplinary provisions for the lapsed, which is known as the *Canonical Epistle*, shows an extended measure of acceptance. He requires penance of all who have lapsed, with the exception (a) of those who had re-established themselves by faithfulness on a second occasion, and (b) of those whose acts had been performed against their will under physical compulsion. The penances are in no case imposed for a long term of years; and are in no case imposed to last till death. But they are carefully discriminated to meet the measure of offence. Those who lapsed under torment do penance forty days; those under imprisonment a year; those in mere cowardice three or four years.

The period from A.D. 350 to A.D. 450 does not disclose much evidence from the Egyptian churches. Some references may be made to Athanasius and to Cyril.

It is hardly possible to give dates to the fragments of S. Athanasius which are cited above. They may perhaps be best placed at the beginning of the period now under consideration, that is to say, in the years following A.D. 350.

The first of these fragments is taken from the manuscript known as *Codex Colbertinus* 200, which is a catena to Jeremiah.<sup>1</sup> The compiler cites it as from S. Athanasius, and nothing is apparent which should disprove this ascription. If it may be accepted from other authorities that Athanasius wrote a treatise against the Novatianists in not less than two books, the fragment now

<sup>1</sup> It would appear that this MS. is no longer to be found in the Bibliothèque nationale at Paris. The number 200 does not appear on p. 49 of Omon's *Concordances des numéros anciens et des numéros actuels des manuscrits latins*,

The church  
of Alex-  
andria.

S. Athana-  
sius.  
Fragments.

cited may probably be referred to this lost treatise against the Novatianists.

Analogy of  
Penance  
and  
Baptism.

“Just as a man baptized by a human priest is illuminated by the grace of the Holy Spirit, so also he who makes exomologesis in penitence (μετανοία) receives through the priest the remission by the grace of Christ.”

Here Athanasius states the analogy soon to become familiar between the human instrument in Baptism and the human instrument in Penance. In Baptism the illumination associated with the human ministration is “by the grace of the Holy Spirit.” In Penance the remission received is “by the grace of Christ.”

A fragment of some length from a sermon of S. Athanasius against the Novatianists is reprinted in Migne from the *Anecdota Græca* of J. C. Wolf (IV. 52, ed. Hamburg), who took it from a catena MS. of passages illustrating the *Acts of the Apostles*.

The sin of  
Simon  
Magus not  
“incur-  
able.”

S. Athanasius here argues that the sin of Simon Magus, grave though it was, was not “incurable,” inasmuch as S. Peter indicated the possibility of forgiveness if only Simon would repent.

“And after he had rightly and justly spoken against him with such severity he proceeded to add, *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.* By this he showed that he did not regard any of this wickedness as incurable (ἀνίατον) by the medicine of repentance, but as curable (θεραπευτικά). For this is a great matter for thee. And do not now seek the gift of God impurely and foully through money. But rather desisting from thy bitterness and this evil mind *repent . . . if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.* This he says not as being in doubt, but because the disorders are hard to be cured; not incurable indeed, but hard to be cured. For if they were incurable the advice would be superfluous: *Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray God.* But to show that repentance is of avail in such circumstances, while yet for those borne down in sin there is need of much penitence and assiduity, he immediately adds: *If perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.*”

It will be noted here that Athanasius makes use of the word ἀνίατα, *incurable*, first employed by Origen.<sup>1</sup> Origen had used it as the equivalent of Tertullian's *irremissibilia*. The sterner outlook taken by Origen and Tertullian had now passed from the Catholic Church, and was only maintained, at least in its full severity, in the Novatianist separation. Against these separatists Athanasius argued that at any rate the sin of Simon Magus, grave as it was, was not classed by S. Peter as an incurable but as a curable disorder.

<sup>1</sup> Origen had probably adopted the word from Plato.



S. Cyril of Alexandria was advanced to the patriarchal throne in A.D. 412, and died in A.D. 444. He wrote a full *Commentary* on the Gospel of S. John, of which much has been preserved. Commenting on our Lord's commission to the Apostles in S. John xx. 22, 23, he says :—

S. Cyril of  
Alexandria.  
*Commen-  
tary on S.  
John.*

“For He held that it was fitting that they who now possessed in themselves the divine and controlling Spirit should have authority both to dismiss the sins of any, and to retain the sins of whomsoever they should will, the Holy Spirit Who dwelt in them both remitting and retaining according to His own proper will, even though the actual operation was effected by men. For in my judgment the Spirit-bearers remit or retain sins in two ways. For either they call to Baptism those for whom it was now fitting that they should obtain it by reason of the worthiness of their life, and the approval of their faith; or some they hinder, and withhold longer from the divine grace as not being yet worthy of it. Or again in another way they both remit and retain sins, rebuking the children of the Church who sin, and forgiving them when they repent, as doubtless Paul also delivered the fornicator in Corinth to the destruction of the flesh that the spirit might be saved, but admitted him later on in order that he should not be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow, as he says himself in his instruction.”

The Holy  
Spirit re-  
mits and  
retains :  
man effects  
the opera-  
tion.  
Two modes,  
Baptism  
and  
Penance.

S. Cyril thus understands that the breathing of the Lord communicated the Holy Spirit, and that the Holy Spirit so communicated dwelt in the Apostles for the purposes for which He was given. Farther, that so indwelling it was the Holy Spirit who remitted and retained the sins of men κατὰ βοῦλῃσιν οἰκείαν according to His own proper will, though the πρᾶγμα, the operation or act, was effected by man. S. Cyril also understands that in conveying this commission the Lord conveyed a commission which found exercise in two ways. For those outside there was the accordance or the withholding of Baptism. For those within the Church who fell into sin there was open the path of Penance where again the commissioned agent could remit or could retain. On the important question whether Baptism is included in this commission of the Lord there can be little doubt that Cyril is right. The commission was for *whosoever sins*, and when the words were spoken humanity was unbaptized. It will be noted that Cyril regards the person reconciled by S. Paul in the second epistle to the Corinthians as being the *fornicator* or incestuous person excommunicated in the first epistle.

A passage will be found printed above from S. Isidore of Pelusium (died c. A.D. 449) in which he charges the Novatians with denying the Divine pronouncement to the priests to remit faults to men.

S. Isidore of  
Pelusium.

The conversion of the empire a great solvent of Christian discipline. Contrast with the pre-Decian period.

The Novatianist protest.

Graded penance in the Asian provinces.

In the great centres discipline gone.

Historians have hardly realised how great a solvent of Christian discipline was the conversion of the empire. So long as the Church was persecuted, she used her prerogative of binding, as it seems to the modern student, with great and even awful severity. In the days before the Decian persecution she would not reconcile the lapsed Christian at all. After the Decian persecution she found a place for him, but not readily, and also not without producing division in her ranks. The Novatianist sect took shape, and came to exist everywhere to brand her clemency as licence. For a time it would seem that she now, perhaps for the better justifying of herself, grew not less but more severe. In the Asian provinces the gradation of offenders, and the elaboration of long terms of penance made the lot of the returning penitent hard indeed. Ancyra stereotypes the custom of the day. Nicæa seems not unlikely to impose it on the universal Church. And then, as by an earthquake shock, comes chaos. For a generation or two the provincial churches of Asia may retain their traditions and usages. But in the great centres of population discipline is gone. The days of the serious binding of offenders have for the East generally been left behind, save in particular cases. How in some respects the Western course was different, will be seen presently. But it may be said broadly that the conversion of the empire dissolved the whole fabric of the discipline of the Christian Church. Till the conversion of the empire none could stand free whom the Church claimed to bind. After the conversion of the empire none stood bound save those who voluntarily submitted to the yoke, excepting always the few conspicuous offenders whom authority singled out for punishment.



## VIII. FROM A.D. 350 TO A.D. 450

### II. THE WESTERN CHURCHES

#### TEXT OF AUTHORITIES

##### 5. Rome and Milan.

- S. Jerome (A.D. 346–420).
- S. Siricius (pope A.D. 384–398).
- S. Innocent I (pope A.D. 402–417).
- S. Cœlestine I (pope A.D. 422–432).
- S. Leo the Great (pope A.D. 440–461).
- Sozomen (see under Constantinople).
- The Gelasian Sacramentary.
- S. Ambrose (A.D. 340–397).
- Paulinus of Milan (c. A.D. 400).
- [Theodosius, A.D. 346–395, notice of the emperor] in  
Theodoret.

##### 6. Africa.

- S. Augustine (A.D. 354–430).
- Macedonius, vicar of Africa (A.D. 414).
- Codex Canonum Ecclesiæ Africanæ.
- Statuta Ecclesiæ Antiqua.
- S. Optatus, bishop of Milevis (c. A.D. 375).

##### 7. Spain and Gaul.

- S. Pacian, bishop of Barcelona (died A.D. 390).
- First Council of Toledo (A.D. 400).
- First Council of Orange (A.D. 441).
- Second Council of Arles (A.D. 443 or 452).
- [S. Hilary of Arles, A.D. 401–449] Life of.
- John Cassian (c. A.D. 355–445).

##### 8. The Moral Condition of Christendom.

- Salvianus, priest of Marseilles (born before A.D. 400).
- Paulinus of Pella (c. A.D. 376–460).

## ROME AND MILAN

[*They who have the keys judge in a sort before the day of judgment.*]

**S. Jerome** (A.D. 346–420).

*Ep.* xiv.

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXII. 352.]

*Ad Heliodorum monachum.*

Qui claves regni cœlorum habentes, quodammodo ante iudicii diem judicant : qui sponsam Domini sobria castitate conservant.

[*Montanists refuse to admit penance : Catholics admit it.*]

*Ep.* xli.

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXII. 476.]

*Ad Marcellam.*

Illi (Montanistæ) ad omne pene delictum Ecclesiæ obserant fores; nos quotidie legimus : *Malo pœnitentiam peccatoris, quam mortem. Et, Nunquid, qui cadit, non resurget, dicit Dominus. Et, Convertimini ad me filii convertentes, et ego curabo contritiones vestras.* Rigidi autem sunt, non quo, et ipsi pejora non peccent : sed hoc inter nos et illos interest, quod illi erubescunt confiteri peccata quasi justi : nos dum pœnitentiam agimus, facilius veniam promeremur.

[*The penance of Fabiola.*]

*Ep.* lxxvii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXII. 692.]

*Ad Oceanum.*

Quis hoc crederet, ut post mortem secundi viri in semetipsam reversa, quo tempore solent viduæ negligentes, iugo servitutis excusso, agere se liberius, adire balneas, volitare per plateas, vultus circumferre meretricios; saccum indueret ut errorem publice fateretur; et tota urbe spectante Romana ante diem Paschæ in Basilica quondam Leterani, qui Cæsariano truncatus est gladio, staret in ordine penitentium, Episcopo, Presbyteris, et omni populo collacrymantibus, sparsum crinem, ora lurida, squalidas manus, sordida colla submitteret? Quæ peccata fletus iste non purget? . . . Aperuit cunctis vulnus suum, et decorem in corpore cicatricem flens Roma conspexit. Dissuta habuit latera, nudum caput, clausum os. Non est ingressa ecclesiam Domini, sed extra castra cum Maria sorore Moysi separata consedit, ut quam sacerdos ejecerat ipse revocaret. Descendit de solio deliciarum suarum, accepit molam, fecit farinam, et discalceatis pedibus transivit fluentia lacrymarum. Sedit super carbones ignis. Hi ei fuere in adiutorium. Faciem, per quam secundo viro placuerat, verberabat, oderat gemmas, linteamina videre non poterat, ornamenta fugiebat. Sic dolebat, quasi adulterium commisisset, et multis impendiis medicaminum unum vulnus sanare cupiebat.

Diu morati sumus in pœnitentia, in qua velut in vadosis locis



**S. Jerome.**

resedimus, ut major nobis et absque ullo impedimento se laudum ejus campus aperiret. Recepta sub oculis omnis Ecclesiæ communione, quid fecit? scilicet in die bona malorum non oblita est; et post naufragium rursum tentare noluit pericula navigandi.

[*Montanists and Novatianists reject penance.*]

*Ep. lxxvii.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXII. 693.]

Non est loci hujus ut pœnitentiam prædicem, et quasi contra Montanum, Novatumque scribens dicam, illam hostiam Domino esse placabilem.

[*The penance of Sabinianus.*]

*Ep. cxlvii.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXII. 1201.]

*Ad Sabinianum lapsus.*

Jaces itaque advolutus genibus meis, et heminam ut tuis verbis utar, sanguinis deprecaris, Et, o te miserum, neglecto judicio Dei, me tantum quasi vindicem times! Ignovi fateor; quid enim aliud possum tibi facere, Christianus. Hortatus sum ut ageres pœnitentiam, et in cilicio et cinere volutareris, ut solitudinem peteres, ut viveres in monasterio, ut Dei misericordiam jugibus lacrymis implorares. At tu bonæ spei columen, excetræ stimulis inflammatus, factus es mihi in arcum perversum, et contra me conviciorum sagittas jadis. Inimicus tibi factus sum, vera dicens.

[*How the bishop proceeds in Penance. He offers for the penitent, and lays his hand upon him. He reconciles him to the altar, pronouncing a prayer before the people.*]

*Dialogus contra Luciferianos (c. A.D. 378).*

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXIII. 159.]

*Luciferianus.*

5. Sacerdos quippe pro laico offert oblationem suam, imponit manum subjecto, reditum sancti Spiritus invocatur, atque ita eum, qui traditus fuerat Satanæ in interitum carnis ut spiritus salvus fieret, indicta in populum oratione, altario reconciliatur, nec prius unum membrum restituit sanitati, quam omnia simul membra confleverint.

[*Sins are washed away not only in the confession of Baptism, but in the clemency of Penance.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXIII. 543.]

*Dialogus adversus Pelagianos.*

Quod autem scriptum est: *Et sanguis Jesu filii ejus mundat nos ab omni peccato*, tam in confessione baptismatis, quam in clementia pœnitentiae accipiendum est. Sed aliud est mundari a Deo, aliud per se esse sine vitio.

**S. Jerome.**

[*The sentence of the bishops and priests declares the actual condition of the persons thus bound or loosed.*]

*Comm. in Evangelium Matthæi, lib. III.*

*Cap. xvi. v. 19.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXVI. 118.]

*Et dabo tibi claves regni cœlorum. Et quodcumque ligaveris super terram, erit ligatum in cœlis: et quodcumque solveris super terram, erit solutum in cœlis.* Istum locum episcopi et presbyteri non intelligentes, aliquid sibi de Pharisæorum assumunt supercilio, ut vel damnent innocentes, vel solvere se noxios arbitrentur; cum apud Deum non sententia sacerdotum, sed reorum vita quærat. Legimus in Levitico de leprosis, ubi jubentur, ut ostendant se sacerdotibus, et si lepram habuerint, tunc a sacerdote immundi fiant: non quo sacerdotes leprosos faciant et immundos; sed quo habeant notitiam leprosi, et non leprosi, et possint discernere qui mundus, quive immundus sit. Quomodo ergo ibi leprosum sacerdos mundum vel immundum facit: sic et hic alligat, vel solvit episcopus et presbyter, non eos qui insontes sunt, vel noxii; sed pro officio suo, cum peccatorum audierit varietates, scit qui ligandus sit, quive solvendus.

[*S. Jerome knows two readings of the Apostolic Decree.*]

*Com. in Epistolam ad Galatas, v. 2.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXVI. 395.]

Et in Actibus Apostolorum narrat historia; cum quidam de circumcisione surgentes asseruissent eos qui ex gentibus crediderant, debere circumcidi, et legem custodire Moysi, seniores qui Jerosolymis erant, et apostolos pariter congregatos, statuisset per litteras, ne superponeretur eis jugum legis, nec amplius observarent, nisi ut custodirent se tantum ab idolothyti, et sanguine, et fornicatione, sive ut in nonnullis exemplaribus scriptum est, et a suffocatis.

[*Montanists and Novatianists reject second marriages.*]

*Com. in Epistolam ad Titum.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXVI. 564.]

Montanus et qui Novati schisma sectantur, nomen sibi munditiæ præsumpsere: putantque secunda matrimonia ab Ecclesiæ communione prohibenda: cum Apostolus de episcopis et presbyteris hoc præcipiens, utique in cæteris relaxarit: non quod hortetur ad secunda matrimonia; sed quod necessitati carnis indulgeat. Scripsit et Tertullianus de Monogamia librum hæreticum: quem Apostolo contraire, nemo qui Apostolum legerit, ignorabit.



[*Apostates to receive communion only at the approach of death.*]

**S. Siricius** (pope A.D. 384–398).

Cap. iii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIII. 1136.]

*Ad Himerium episcopum Tarraconensem.*

Adjectum est etiam, quosdam Christianos ad apostasiam, quod dici nefas est, transeuntes, et idolorum cultu ac sacrificiorum contaminatione profanatos. Quos a Christi corpore et sanguine, quo dudum redempti fuerant renascendo, jubemus abscidi. Et si resipiscentes forte aliquando fuerint ad lamenta conversi, his, quam diu vivunt, agenda pœnitentia est, et in ultimo fine suo reconciliationis gratia tribuenda : quia, docente Domino, nolumus mortem peccatoris, tantum ut convertatur et vivat.

[*Of inconsistent penitents, who after Penance, undertake military service, or such jovial pleasures, or new marriages, showing their incontinence by sons begotten after their absolution. As they cannot do Penance again, they may only join the faithful in the Prayer, but may be communicated before death.*]

Cap. v.

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIII. 1137.]

De his vero non incongrue dilectio tua apostolicam sedem credidit consulendam, qui acta pœnitentia, tanquam canes ac sues ad vomitus pristinos et volutabra redeuntes, et militiæ cingulum, et ludicras voluptates, et nova conjugia, et inhibitos denuo appetivere concubitus, quorum professam incontinentiam generati post absolutionem filii prodiderunt. De quibus, quia jam suffugium non habent pœnitendi, id duximus decernendum, ut sola intra ecclesiam fidelibus oratione jungantur, sacrae mysteriorum celebritati, quamvis non mereantur intersint; a Dominicæ autem mensæ convivio segregentur; ut hac saltem districtione correpti, et ipsi in se sua errata castigent, et aliis exemplum tribuant, quatenus ab obscœnis cupiditatibus retrahantur. Quos tamen, quoniam carnali fragilitate ceciderunt, viatico munere, cum ad Dominum cœperint proficisci, per communionis gratiam, volumus sublevari. Quam formam et circa mulieres, quæ se post pœnitentiam talibus pollutionibus devinxerunt servandam esse censemus.

[*As clerics may not do Penance, so laymen after Penance may not become clerics.*]

Cap. xiv.

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIII. 1145.]

Illud quoque nos par fuit providere, ut sicut pœnitentiam agere cuiquam non conceditur clericorum, ita et post pœnitentiam ac reconciliationem nulli umquam laico liceat honorem clericatus adipisci : quia quamvis sint omnium peccatorum contagione mundati, nulla tamen debent gerendorum sacramentorum instrumenta suscipere, qui dudum fuerint vasa vitiorum.

[Communion conceded at death : former practice more rigorous.]

**S. Innocent I.** (pope A.D. 402-417).

*Ep. vi. cap. ii.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, XX. 498.]

*Ad Exsuperium episcopum Tolosanum.*

Et hoc quæsitum est, quid de his observari oporteat, qui post baptismum omni tempore incontinentiæ voluptatibus dediti, in extremo fine vitæ suæ pœnitentiam simul et reconciliationem communionis exposcunt.

De his observatio prior, durior; posterior, interveniente misericordia, inclinatio. Nam consuetudo prior tenuit, ut concederetur pœnitentia, sed communio negaretur. Nam cum illis temporibus crebræ persecutiones essent, ne communionis concessa facilitas homines de reconciliatione securos non revocaret a lapsu, merito negata communio est: concessa pœnitentia, ne totum penitus negaretur: et duriolem remissionem fecit temporis ratio. Sed postquam Dominus noster pacem ecclesiis suis reddidit, jam depulso terrore, communionem dari abeuntibus placuit, et propter Domini misericordiam, quasi viaticum profecturis, et ne Novatiani hæretici, negantis veniam, asperitatem et duritiam sequi videamur. Tribuetur ergo cum pœnitentia extrema communio: ut homines hujusmodi vel in supremis suis, permittente Salvatore nostro, a perpetuo exitio vindicentur.

[Heretics are received by the imposition of hands after the pattern of Penance.]

*Ep. xxiv.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, XX. 550.]

*Ad Alexandrum Episcopum Antiochenum.*

Arianos præterea, cæterasque hujusmodi pestes, quia eorum laicos conversos ad Dominum, sub imagine pœnitentiæ ac sancti Spiritus sanctificatione per manus impositionem suscipimus, non videtur clericos eorum cum sacerdotii aut ministerii ejuspiam suscipi debere dignitate: quoniam quibus solum baptisma ratum esse permittimus quod utique in nomine Patris et Feli et Spiritus sancti perficitur. . . .

[Reconciliation of penitents, both for graver and for lighter offences, to take place on the Thursday before Easter. The priest to hear the confession, to judge, to order the discharge. A sick person in peril of death may be reconciled without waiting for the Holy week.]

*Ep. xxv.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, XX. 559.]

*Ad Decentium episcopum Eugubinum.*

De pœnitentibus autem qui sive ex gravioribus commissis, sive ex levioribus pœnitentiam gerunt, si nulla interveniat ægritudo, quinta feria ante Pascha eis remittendum, Romanæ Ecclesiæ consuetudo demonstrat. Cæterum de æstimando pondere de-



**S. Innocent I.**

lictorum sacerdotis est judicare, ut attendat ad confessionem pœnitentis, et ad fletus atque lacrymas corrigentis; ac tum jubere dimitti, cum viderit congruam satisfactionem. Sane si quis in ægritudinem inciderit, atque usque ad desperationem devenerit, ei est ante tempus Paschæ relaxandum, ne de sæculo absque communione discedat.

[*Penance not to be denied to the dying.*]

**S. Cœlestinus Papa I. (pope A.D. 422–432).**

*Ep. iv.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, L. 431.]

*Cœlestinus universis episcopis per Viennensem et Narbonensem provincias constitutis.*

Agnovimus pœnitentiam morientibus denegari, nec illorum desideriis annui, qui obitus sui tempore hoc animæ suæ cupiunt remedio subveniri. Horremus, fateor, tantæ impietatis aliquem reperiri, ut de Dei pietate desperet: quasi non possit ad se quovis tempore concurrenti succurrere, et periclitantem sub onere peccatorum hominem, pondere quo se ille expediri desiderat, liberare. Quid hoc, rogo, aliud est, quam morienti mortem addere, ejusque animam sua crudelitate, ne absoluta esse possit, occidere? cum Deus ad subveniendum paratissimus, invitans ad pœnitentiam, sic promittat. . . . Vera ergo ad Deum conversio in ultimis positorum, mente potius est æstimanda, non tempore, propheta hoc taliter asserente: *Cum conversus ingemueris, tunc salvus eris.* Cum ergo sit Dominus cordis inspector, quovis tempore non est deneganda pœnitentia postulanti, cum illi se obliget iudici cui occulta omnia noverit revelari.

[*Bishops not to exclude from communion readily, or in indignation: where it is necessary to impose penance, it should be proportioned to the offence.*]

**S. Leo Magnus (pope A.D. 440–461).**

*Ep. x.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, LIV. 635.]

*Ad episcopos per provinciam Viennensem constitutos.*

Nulli Christianorum facile communio denegetur, nec ad indignantis fiat hoc arbitrium sacerdotis, quod in magni reatus ultionem invitus et dolens quodammodo debet inferre animus judicantis. Cognovimus enim pro commissis et levibus verbis quosdam a gratia communionis exclusos, et animam pro qua Christi sanguis effusus est, irrogatione tam sævi supplicii sauciatam et inermem quodammodo, exutamque omni munimine, diabolicis incursibus, ut facile caperetur, objectam. Certe si quando causa talis emerserit, ut pro commissi criminis qualitate aliquem juste faciat communione privari, is tantum pœnæ subdendus est quem reatus involvit; nec particeps debet esse supplicii, qui consors

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non docetus fuisse commissi. Sed quid mirum eum in laicos talem existere, qui soleat de sacerdotum damnatione guadere.

[*Remission not only by Baptism, but by the supplications of the sacerdotes (and not without them). The Lord with His ministers.*]

Ep. cviii.

[Migne, P. L., LIV. 1011.]

*Ad Theodorum Forojuliensem Episcopum.*

Multiplex misericordia Dei ita lapsibus subvenit humanis, ut non solum per baptismi gratiam, sed etiam per pœnitentiæ medicinam spes vitæ reparetur æternæ, ut qui regenerationis dona violassent, proprio se iudicio condemnantes ad remissionem criminum pervenirent: sic divinæ bonitatis præsidiis ordinatis, ut indulgentia Dei nisi supplicationibus sacerdotum nequeat obtineri. Mediator enim Dei et hominum homo Christus Jesus hanc præpositis Ecclesiæ tradidit potestatem, ut et confitentibus actionem pœnitentiæ darent, et eosdem salubri satisfactione purgatos, ad communionem sacramentorum per januam reconciliationis admitterent. Cui utique operi incessabiliter ipse Salvator intervenit, nec umquam ab his abest quæ ministris suis exsequenda commisit, dicens: Ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus usque ad consummationem sæculi: ut si quid per servitutem nostram bono ordine et gratulando impletur effectum, non ambigamus per Spiritum sanctum fuisse donatum.

[*Those who die without this ministry cannot after death obtain this absolution. The Lord reserves them to His justice. Importance of priestly absolution before the last day. Unwisdom of deferring reconciliation. Signs may be accepted where words fail.*]

Ep. cviii.

[Migne, P. L., LIV. 1012.]

Si autem aliquis eorum pro quibus Domino supplicamus, quocumque interceptus obstaculo, a munere indulgentiæ præsentis exciderit, et priusquam ad constituta remedia perveniat, temporalem vitam humana conditione finierit, quod manens in corpore non recepit, consequi exutus carne non poterit. Nec necesse est nos eorum qui sic obierint merita actusque discutere, cum Dominus Deus noster, cujus iudicia nequeunt comprehendere, quod sacerdotale ministerium implere non potuit, suæ justitiæ reservaverit: ita potestatem suam timeri volens, ut hic terror omnibus prosit, et quod quibusdam tepidis aut negligentibus accidit, nemo non metuat. Multum enim utile ac necessarium est ut peccatorum reatus ante ultimum diem sacerdotali supplicatione solvatur.

Unde oportet unumquemque Christianum conscientiæ suæ habere iudicium, ne converti ad Deum de die in diem differat, nec satisfactionis sibi tempus in fine vitæ suæ constituat: quia



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periculose hac se conditione fragilitas et ignorantia humana concludit, ut ad paucarum horarum se reservet incertum; et cum possit pleniore satisfactione indulgentiam promereri, illius temporis angustias eligat, quo vix inveniat spatium vel confessio pœnitentis, vel reconciliatio sacerdotalis. Verum, ut dixi, etiam talium necessitati ita auxiliandum est, ut et actio illis pœnitentiæ, et communionis gratia, si eam, etiam amisso vocis officio, per indicia integri sensus postulant, non negetur. Aut si aliqua vi ægritudinis ita fuerint aggravati, ut quod paulo ante poscebant, sub præsentia sacerdotis significare non valeant, testimonia eis fidelium circumstantium prodesse debebunt, ut simul et pœnitentiæ et reconciliationis beneficium consequantur; servata tamen regula canonum paternorum circa eorum personas qui in Deum a fide discedendo peccarunt.

*[For those who have allowed themselves to be re-baptized the remedy is Penance with the imposition of the bishop's hands, the duration of the penance being ordered by his judgment, which is to be given according to circumstances. In special cases the penitent may be relieved while his penance is in course.]*

Ep. clix.

[Migne, P. L., LIV. 1138.]

*Ad Nicetam episcopum Aquileiensem.*

His vero de quibus dilectio tua similiter nos credidit consulendos, qui ad iterandum baptismum vel metu coacti sunt vel errore traducti, et nunc se contra catholicæ fidei sacramentum egisse cognoscunt, ea custodienda est moderatio, qua in societatem nostram non nisi per pœnitentiæ remedium, et per impositionem episcopalis manus, communionis recipiant unitatem; tempora pœnititudinis, habita moderatione, tuo constituyente iudicio, prout conversorum animos perspexeris esse devotos: pariter etiam habens senilis ætatis intuitum, et periculorum quorumque aut ægritudinis respiciens necessitates. In quibus si quis ita graviter urgeatur, et dum adhuc pœnitet, de salute ipsius desperetur, oportet ei per sacerdotalem sollicitudinem communionis gratia subveniri.

*[In the case of captives polluted by food offered to idols the compunction of the heart is to be weighed rather than the length of time.]*

Ep. clix.

[Migne, P. L., LIV. 1138.]

De his autem Christianis qui inter eos a quibus fuerent captivati immolatiis cibis asseruntur esse polluti, consultationi charitatis tuæ hoc etiam respondendum esse credidimus, ut pœnitentiæ satisfactione purgentur, quæ non tam temporis longitudine quam cordis compunctione pensanda est. Et sive hoc terror extorserit, sive fames suaserit, non dubitetur abolendum, cum hujusmodi cibis pro metu aut indigentia, non pro religionis veneratione sit sumptus.

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[*Public penance with imposition of hands is not to be used for priests and deacons. These should fulfil their satisfaction in retirement.*]

Ep. clxvii.

[Migne, P. L., LIV. 1203.]

*Ad Rusticum Narbonensem episcopum.*

*Inquis ii. De presbytero vel diacono qui si, cognito crimine suo, pœnitentiam publicam petat, utrum ei per manus impositionem danda sit.*

*Resp.* Alienum est a consuetudine ecclesiastica ut qui in presbyterali honore aut in diaconii gradu fuerint consecrati, ii pro crimine aliquo suo per manus impositionem remedium accipiant pœnitendi : quod sine dubio ex apostolica traditione descendit, secundum quod scriptum est : *Sacerdos si peccaverit, quis orabit pro illo.* Unde hujusmodi lapsis, ad promerendam misericordiam Dei, privata est expetenda secessio, ubi illis satisfactio, si fuerit digna, sit etiam fructuosa.

[*Penitents in sickness, who on recovery withhold penance, are not to be left, but frequently exhorted.*]

[Migne, P. L., LIV. 1205.]

*Inquis. vii. De his qui in ægritudine pœnitentiam accipiunt, et cum revaluerint, agere eam nolunt.*

*Resp.* Culpanda est talium negligentia, sed non penitus deserenda : ut crebris cohortationibus incitati, quod necessarie expetierunt, fideliter exsequantur. Nemo enim desperandus est dum in hoc corpore constitutus est : quia nonnunquam quod diffidentia ætatis differtur, consilio maturiore perficitur.

[*Of those who having sought Penance, decline it when the priest comes to give what they ask. Penance may be given later, if they ask more earnestly.*]

[Migne, P. L., LIV. 1206.]

*Inquis. ix. De his qui dolore nimio perurgente rogant dari sibi pœnitentiam, et cum venerit presbyter daturus quod petebant, si dolor parum perquieverit, excusant et nolunt accipere quod offertur.*

*Resp.* Dissimulatio hæc potest non de contemptu esse remedii, sed de metu gravius delinquendi. Unde pœnitentia quæ dilata est, cum studiosius petita fuerit, non negetur, ut quoque modo ad indulgentiæ medicinam anima vulnerata perveniat.

[*After Penance litigation should be avoided.*]

[Migne, P. L., LIV. 1206.]

*Inquis. x. De his qui pœnitentiam professi sunt, si in foro litigare cœperint.*

*Resp.* Aliud quidem est debita justa reposcere, aliud propria perfectionis amore contemnere. Sed illicitorum veniam postu-



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lantem oportet a multis etiam licitis abstinere, dicente Apostolo : *Omnia mihi licent, sed non omnia expediunt.* Unde si pœnitens habet causam quam negligere forte non debeat, melius expetit ecclesiasticum quam forense iudicium.

[*Penitents do well to avoid commerce.*]

[Migne, P. L., LIV. 1206.]

*Inquis. xi. De his qui in pœnitentia vel post pœnitentiam negotiantur.*

*Resp.* Qualitas lucri negotiantem aut excusat aut arguit, quia est honestus quæstus et turpis. Verumtamen pœnitenti utilius est dispendia pati quam periculis negotiationis obstringi, quia difficile est inter ementis vendentisque commercium non intervenire peccatum.

[*After Penance none should undertake military service.*]

[Migne, P. L., LIV. 1206.]

*Inquis. xii. De his qui post pœnitentiam ad militiam revertuntur.*

*Resp.* Contrarium est omnino ecclesiasticis regulis, post pœnitentiæ actionem redire ad militiam sæcularem, cum Apostolus dicat : *Nemo militans Deo implicat se negotiis sæcularibus.* Unde non est liber a laqueis diaboli qui se militia mundana voluerit implicare.

[*The copula of marriage, though forbidden after Penance, seems to be venial.*]

[Migne, P. L., LIV. 1207.]

*Inquis. xiii. De his qui post pœnitentiam uxores accipiunt, vel concubinas sibi conjungunt.*

*Resp.* In adolescentia constitutus, si urgente aut metu mortis aut captivitatis periculo, pœnitentiam gessit, et postea timens lapsum incontinentiæ juvenilis, copulam uxoris elegit, ne crimen fornicationis incurreret, rem videtur fecisse venialem, si præter conjugem, nullam omnino cognoverit. In quo tamen non regulam constituimus, sed quid sit tolerabilius æstimamus. Nam secundum veram cognitionem nihil magis ei congruit qui pœnitentiam gessit, quam castitas perseverans et mentis et corporis.

[*Captives, baptized in infancy, must before acceptance do public penance for any of the three capital sins : but for minor matters fasting and the imposition of hands suffice.*]

[Migne, P. L., LIV. 1209.]

*Inquis. xix. De his qui parvuli quidem baptizati, a gentilibus capti sunt et cum illis gentiliter convixerunt ; cum ad Romaniam adhuc juvenes venerint, si communionem petierint, quid erit observandum.*

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*Resp.* Si convivio solo gentilium et escis immolatitiis usi sunt, possunt jejuniis et manus impositione purgari: ut deinceps ab idolothytis abstinentes, sacramentorum Christi possint esse participes. Si autem aut idola adoraverunt, aut homicidiis vel fornicationibus contaminati sunt, ad communionem eos, nisi per pœnitentiam publicam, non oportet admitti.

[*Condemns the practice of public confession.*]

*Ep. clxviii.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, LIV, 1210.]

*Ad universos episcopos per Campaniam, Samnium, et Picenum constitutos* (6 Mar. A.D. 459).

2. Illam etiam contra apostolicam regulam præsumptionem, quam nuper agnovi a quibusdam illicita usurpatione committi, modis omnibus constituo submoveri. De pœnitentia scilicet quæ a fidelibus postulatur ne de singulorum peccatorum genere libello scripta professio publice recitetur, cum reatus conscientiarum sufficiat solis sacerdotibus indicari confessione secreta. Quamvis enim plenitudo fidei videatur esse laudabilis, quæ propter Dei timorem apud homines erubescere non veretur, tamen quia non omnium hujusmodi sunt peccata, ut ea, qui pœnitentiam poscunt non timeant publicare, removeatur tam improbabilis consuetudo, ne multi a pœnitentiæ remediis arceantur, dum aut erubescunt aut metuunt inimicis suis sua facta reserari, quibus possint legum constitutione percelli. Sufficit enim illa confessio, quæ primum Deo offertur, tum etiam sacerdoti, qui pro delictis pœnitentium precatior accedit. Tunc enim demum plures ad pœnitentiam poterunt provocari, si populi auribus non publicetur conscientia confitentis. Datum pridie nonas Martii, Recimere consule.

[*Order for the reconciliation of penitents on the Thursday before Easter.*]

**The Gelasian Sacramentary.** [*Ed.* H. A. Wilson, M.A., Oxford, 1894, p. 63.]

*Liber Sacramentorum Romanæ Ecclesiæ.*

xxxviii.

ORATIONES IN QUINTA FERIA.

*Eodem die non psallitur, nec salutatur, id est non dicit Dominus vobiscum: et Reconciliatio Pœnitentis.*

Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, da, quæsumus, universis famulis tuis plenius atque perfectius omnia festi paschalis introire mysteria; ut incunctanter pia corda cognoscant quantum debeant de confirmata in Christo renascentium glorificatione gaudere. Per.

Concede credentibus, misericors Deus, salvum nobis de Christi passione remedium, et humanæ fragilitatis præteritæ culpæ laqueos æterno suffragio plebs absolvat. Per Dominum nostrum.



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Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, qui vitam humani generis, pro nobis Filio tuo moriente, salvasti, præsta, quæsumus, ut in hac populi tui devotione fructus proveniat gaudiorum. Per Dominum.

**ORDO AGENTIBUS PUBLICAM PŒNITENTIAM.**

*Egreditur pœnitens de loco ubi pœnitentiam gessit, et in gremio præsentatur ecclesiæ prostrato omni corpore in terra. Et postulat in his verbis diaconus.*

Adest, o venerabilis pontifex, tempus acceptum, dies propitiæ divinæ et salutis humanæ, qua mors interitum et vita accepit æterna principium, quando in vinea Domini Sabaoth sic novorum plantatio facienda est ut purgetur et curatio vetustatis. Quamvis enim a divitiis bonitatis et pietatis Dei nihil temporis vacet, nunc tamen et largior est per indulgentiam remissio peccatorum, et copiosior per gratiam assumptio renascentium. Augemur regenerandis, crescimus reversis. Lavant aquæ, lavant lacrimæ. Inde gaudium de assumptione vocatorum, hinc lætitia de absolutione pœnitentium. Inde est quod supplex tuus, postea quam in varias formas criminum, neglectu mandatorum cælestium, et morum probabilitum transgressione, cecidit, humiliatus atque prostratus, prophetica ad Deum voce clamat, dicens, Peccavi, impie egi, iniquitatem feci, miserere mei, Domine, evangelicam vocem non frustratoria aure capiens, Beati qui lugent, quoniam ipsi consolabuntur. Manducavit, sicut scriptum est panem doloris, lacrimis stratum rigavit, cor suum luetu, corpus afflixit ieiuniis, ut animæ suæ reciperet quam perdiderat sanitatem. Unicum itaque est pœnitentiæ suffragium, quod et singulis prodest, et omnibus in commune succurrit. Hic ergo, dum ad pœnitudinis actionem tantis excitatur exemplis, sub conspectu ingemiscantis ecclesiæ, venerabilis pontifex, protestatur et dicit, Iniquitates meas ego agnosco, et delictum meum contra me est semper. Averte faciem tuam a peccatis meis, Domine, et omnes iniquitates meas dele. Redde mihi lætitiâ salutaris tui, et spiritu principali confirma me. Quo ita supplicante, et misericordiam Dei afflicto corde poscente, redintegra in eo, apostolice pontifex, quicquid diabolo scindente corruptum est, et orationum tuarum patrocinantibus meritis, per divinæ reconciliationis gratiam fac hominem proximum Deo, ut qui ante in suis perversitatibus displicebat, nunc iam placere se Domino in regione vivorum, devicto mortis suæ auctore gratuletur. Per Dominum.

*Post hoc admonetur ab episcopo sive ab alio sacerdote, ut quod pœnitendo diluit, iterando non revocet. Inde vero has dicit orationes sacerdos super eum.*

Adesto Domine supplicationibus nostris, et me qui etiam misericordiam tuam primus indigeo clementer exaudi, ut quem non electione meriti sed dono gratiæ tuæ constituisti operis huius

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ministerium; da fiduciam tui muneris exequendi, et ipse in nostro ministerio quod tuæ pietatis est operare. Per.

Præsta, quæsumus, Domine huic famulo tuo dignum pœnitentiæ fructum, ut ecclesiæ tuæ sanctæ, a cuius integritate deviarat peccando, admissorum veniam consequendo, reddatur innoxius. Per Dominum.

Deus humani generis conditor et benignissime reformator, qui hominem invidia diaboli ab æternitate deiectum unici Filii tui sanguine redemisti, vivifica itaque quem tibi nullatenus mori desideras, et qui non derelinquis devium, assume correctum. Moveant pietatem tuam, quæsumus, Domine, huius famuli tui lacrimosa suspiria. Tu eius medere vulneribus. Tu iacenti manum porrige salutarem, ne ecclesia tua aliqua sui corporis portione vastetur, ne grex tuus detrimentum sustineat, ne de familiæ tuæ damno inimicus exultet, ne renatum lavacro salutari mors secunda possideat. Tibi ergo, Domine, supplices preces, tibi fletum cordis effundimus. Tu parce confitenti, ut in imminentes pœnas sententiamque futuri iudicii, te miserante, non incidat. Nesciat quod terret in tenebris, quod stridet in flammis, atque ab erroris via ad iter reversus iustitiæ nequaquam ultra novis vulneribus saucietur, sed integrum sit ei atque perpetuum et quod gratia tua contulit et quod misericordia reformavit. Per.

*Item ad reconciliandum pœnitentem.*

Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, confitenti tibi huic famulo tuo pro tua pietate peccata relaxa, ut non plus ei noceat conscientiæ reatus ad pœnam quam indulgentia tuæ pietatis ad veniam. Per Dominum.

Omnipotens et misericors Deus, qui peccatorum indulgentiam in confessione celeri posuisti, succurre lapsis, miserere confessis, ut quos delictorum catena constringit, magnitudo tuæ pietatis absolvat. Per.

Deus qui confitentium tibi corda purificas, et accusantes se conscientias ab omni vinculo iniquitatis absolvis, da indulgentiam reis, et medicinam tribue vulneratis, ut percepta remissione omnium peccatorum sincera deinceps devotione permaneant, et nullum redemptionis æternæ sustineant detrimentum. Per.

Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, æterne Deus, respice super hunc famulum tuum qui ab infesta sæculi tempestate demersus, flebili lamentatione suos accusat excessus, ut fletus ac gemitus eius pie suscipias, eumque de tenebris ad lumen revoces, et medelam confitenti, salutem pœnitenti, et vulnerato auxilium sanitatis indulgeas. Nec ultra inimicus in eius habeat anima potestatem, eiusque confessionem libenter admittens, ecclesiæ tuæ purificatum restitue, ac tuo altario repræsentata, ut ad sacramentum reconciliationis admissus una nobiscum sancto nomini tuo gratias agere mereatur. Per.



[*If no power of loosing, then no power of binding.*]

**S. Ambrose** (A.D. 340–397).

I. ii. (7).

[Migne, *P. L.*, XVI. 468.]

*De Pœnitentia.*

Ecclesia in utroque servat obedientiam, ut peccatum et alliget et relaxet : hæresis in altero immitis, in altero inobediens ; vult ligare quod non resolvat : non vult solvere quod ligavit ; in quo se sua damnat sententia. Dominus par jus et solvendi esse voluit, et ligandi, qui utrumque pari conditione permisit : ergo qui solvendi jus non habet, nec ligandi habet. Sicut enim secundum Dominicam sententiam qui ligandi jus habet, et solvendi habet ; ita istorum adsertio seipsam strangulat, ut quia solvendi sibi jus negant, negare debeant et ligandi. Quomodo igitur potest alterum licere, alterum non licere ? Quibus donatum utrumque est, aut utrumque licere manifestum est, aut utrumque non licere certum est. Ecclesiæ utrumque licet, hæresi utrumque non licet ; jus enim hoc solis permissum sacerdotibus est. Recte igitur hoc ecclesia vindicat, quæ veros sacerdotes habet : hæresis vindicare non potest, quæ sacerdotes Dei non habet.

[*God has conceded to His priests the liberty of remitting all sins without exception.*]

I. iii. (10).

[Migne, *P. L.*, XVI. 469.]

In eo igitur patrem vestrum damnatis sententia, qui distinctionem peccatorum facitis, quæ solvenda a vobis putetis, et quæ sine remedio esse arbitremini : sed Deus distinctionem non facit, qui misericordiam suam promisit omnibus, et relaxandi licentiam sacerdotibus suis sine ulla exceptione concessit.

[*Novatianists only except from absolution the grave sins : Novatian admitted no Penance.*]

I. iii. (10).

[Migne, *P. L.*, XVI. 469.]

Sed aiunt se exceptis gravioribus criminibus relaxare veniam levioribus. Non hoc quidem auctor vestri erroris Novatianus, quæ nomini pœnitentiam dandam putavit ; ea scilicet contemplatione, ut quod ipse non posset solvere, non ligaret ; ne ligando separari a se faceret solutionem.

[*If sins cannot be remitted by man, why do you lay hands or baptize ?*]

I. viii. (36).

[Migne, *P. L.*, XVI. 477.]

Cur ergo manus imponitis, et benedictionis opus creditis, si quis forte revaluerit ægrotus ? Cur præsumitis aliquos a colluvione diaboli per vos mundari posse ? Cur baptizatis, si per hominem peccata dimitti non licet ? In baptismo utique remissio peccatorum omnium est : quid interest, utrum per pœnitentiam, an

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per lavacrum hoc jus sibi datum sacerdotes vindicent? Unum utroque mysterium est.

[*Can forgiveness be denied to the lapsed who afterwards became martyrs?*]

I. xi. (49).

[Migne, *P. L.*, XVI. 481.]

Plurimos comperimus se denuo reformasse post lapsum, et pro nomine Dei passos : num possumus his martyrum consortia negare, quibus Dominus Jesus non negavit? Audemus igitur dicere non esse his vitam redditam, quibus Christus coronam reddidit?

[*Public penance for secret sins. The hope of pardon is the inspiration of the penitent.*]

I. xvi. (90).

[Migne, *P. L.*, XVI. 493.]

Si quis igitur occulta crimina habens, propter Christum tamen studiose pœnitentiam egerit; quomodo ista recipit, si ei communio non refunditur? Volo veniam reus speret, petat eam lacrymis, petat gemitibus, petat populi totius fletibus; ut ignoscatur, obsecret: et cum secundo et tertio fuerit dilata ejus communio, credat remissius se supplicasse, fletus augeat, miserabilior postea revertatur, teneat pedes brachiis, osculetur osculis, lavet fletibus, nec dimittat, ut de ipso dicat Dominus Jesus: *Remissa sunt peccata ejus multa, quoniam dilexit multum.*

[*The reference of the Novatianists to the text Heb. vi. 4.*]

II. ii. (6).

[Migne, *P. L.*, XVI. 497.]

Cum igitur tam evidenti et ipsius Apostoli et scriptorum ejus exemplo redarguantur, tamen adhuc obniti volunt, et auctoritatem aiunt Apostolicæ sibi suffragari sententiæ, allegantes scriptum ad Hebræos: *Impossibile est enim hos qui semel illuminati sunt, etc.*

[*The transmission of Christ's commission by the Apostles to the priesthood after them.*]

II. ii. (12).

[Migne, *P. L.*, XVI. 499.]

Similiter impossibile videbatur per pœnitentiam peccata dimitti. Concessit hoc Christus Apostolis suis, quod ab Apostolis ad sacerdotum officia transmissum est.

[*Only one formal Penance admissible.*]

II. x. (95).

[Migne, *P. L.*, XVI. 520.]

Merito reprehenduntur qui sæpius agendam pœnitentiam putant; quia luxuriantur in Christo. Nam si vere agerent pœnitentiam, iterandam postea non putarent; quia sicut unum baptisma, ita una pœnitentia, quæ tamen publice agitur; nam quotidiani nos debet pœnitere peccati: sed hæc delictorum leviorum illa graviorum.



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[*Conduct incompatible with penance. What penance should involve.*]

II. x. (96).

[Migne, P. L., XVI. 520.]

Facilius autem inveni qui innocentiam servaverint, quam qui congrue egerint pœnitentiam. An quisquam illam pœnitentiam putat, ubi acquirendæ ambitio dignitatis, ubi vini effusio, ubi ipsius copulæ conjugalis usus? Renuntiandum sæculo est; somno ipsi minus indulgendum, quam natura postulat; interpellandus est gemitibus, interrumpendus est suspiriis, sequestrandus orationibus.

[*The Spirit is God's gift : man has the ministry of the Spirit.*]

I. viii. (90).

[Migne, P. L., XVI. 726.]

*De Spiritu Sancto.*

Simul illud adverte, qui Deus dat Spiritum sanctum. Non enim humanum hoc opus, neque ab homine datur; sed qui invocatur a sacerdote, a Deo traditur; in quo Dei munus, ministerium sacerdotis est. Nam si Paulus Apostolus judicavit, quod ipse donare Spiritum Sanctum sua auctoritate non posset, et in tantum se huic officio imparem credidit, ut a Deo nos Spiritu optaret impleri; quis tantus est, qui hujus traditionem muneris sibi audeat adrogare? Itaque Apostolus votum precatione detulit, non jus auctoritate aliqua vendicavit. Impetrare optavit, non imperare præsumpsit.

[*Only God forgives sin : man exercises the ministry of God's forgiveness.*]

III. xviii. (133, 137).

[Migne, P. L., XVI. 808.]

Peccata quoque nemo condonat nisi unus Deus, quia æque scriptum est : *Quis potest peccata donare, nisi solus Deus?* . . . . . Ecce quia per Spiritum Sanctum peccata donantur; homines autem in remissionem peccatorum ministerium suum exhibent; non jus alicujus potestatis exercent. Neque enim in suo, sed in Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti nomine peccata dimittunt. Isti rogant, Divinitas donat; humanum enim obsequium, sed munificentia supernæ est potestatis.

[*At Milan the reconciliation of penitents took place on Good Friday.*]

Ep. xx.

[Migne, P. L., XVI. 1002.]

Erat autem dies quo sese Dominus pro nobis tradidit, quo in Ecclesia pœnitentia relaxatur.

**S. Ambrose.**

[*Some fear the publica supplicatio of the Church penance.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XVI. 517.]

86. Nam plerique futuri supplicii metu peccatorum suorum conscii, pœnitentiam petunt, et cum acceperint, publicæ supplicationis revocantur pudore.

[*Description of S. Ambrose as the minister of Penance.*]

**Paulinus Mediolanensis** (c. A.D. 400).

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIV. 40.]

*Vita S. Ambrosii.*

Erat etiam gaudens cum gaudentibus, et flens cum flentibus; siquidem quotiescunque illi aliquis ob percipiendam pœnitentiam lapsus suos confessus esset, ita flebat, ut et illum flere compelleret; videbatur enim sibi cum jacente jacere. Causas autem criminum quæ illi confitebantur, nulli nisi Domino soli, apud quem intercedebat, loquebatur; bonum relinquens exemplum posteris sacerdotibus, ut intercessores apud Deum magis sint, quam accusatores apud homines.

[*The conviction of Theodosius that the sentence of S. Ambrose was ratified in heaven.*]

**Theodoret.**

V. 17.

[Migne, *P. G.*, LXXXII. 1234.]

*Ecclesiastica Historia.*

Σὺ μὲν, ἔφη, 'Ρουφῖνε, παῖζεις, τῶν γὰρ ἐμῶν οὐκ ἐπαισθάνη κακῶν· ἐγὼ δὲ στένω καὶ ὀλοφύρομαι τὴν ἐμαντοῦ συμφορὰν λογιζόμενος, ὡς τοῖς μὲν οἰκέταις καὶ τοῖς προσαίταις ἄνετος ὁ θεὸς νεὼς, καὶ εἰσίσιν ἀδεῶς, καὶ τὸν οἰκεῖον ἀντιβολουσιν Δεσπότην, ἐμοὶ δὲ καὶ οὗτος ἄβατος, καὶ πρὸς τούτῳ μοι ὁ οὐρανὸς ἀποκέκλεισται. Μέμνημαι γὰρ τῆς Δεσποτικῆς φωνῆς, ἣ διαρρήδην φησὶν. "Ὁ ἐὰν δῆσητε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ἔσται δεδεμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

## AFRICA

[*Penance not accorded by the Church to recurring offenders : but the patience of GOD is open.*]

**S. Augustine** (A.D. 354–430).

*Ep. cliii. 7.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXXIII. 655.]

In tantum autem hominum aliquando iniquitas progreditur, ut etiam post actam pœnitentiam, post altaris reconciliationem, vel similia vel graviora committant : et tamen Deus facit etiam super tales oriri solem suum ; nec minus tribuit quam ante tribuebat largissima munera vitæ ac salutis. Et quamvis eis in Ecclesia locus humillimæ pœnitentiæ non concedatur ; Deus tamen super eos suæ patientiæ non obliviscitur.



**S. Augustine.**

Cum igitur super peccatores tanta sit patientia, tanta misericordia Dei, ut in hac temporali vita moribus emendatis, non damnentur in æternum.

[*After Penance the clerical state is barred.*]

Ep. clxxxv. 45.

[Migne, P. L., XXXIII. 812.]

*De correctione Donatistarum.*

Ut enim constitueretur in Ecclesia, ne quisquam post alicujus criminis pœnitentiam clericatum accipiat, vel ad clericatum redeat, vel in clericatu maneat, non desperatione indulgentiæ, sed rigore factum est disciplinæ: alioquin contra claves datas Ecclesiæ disputabitur, de quibus dictum est, *Quæ solveritis in terra, soluta erunt et in cælo*. Sed ne forsitan etiam detectis criminibus, spe honoris ecclesiastici animus intumescens superbe ageret pœnitentiam, severissime placuit ut post actam de crimine dampnabili pœnitentiam, nemo sit clericus, ut desperatione temporalis altitudinis medicina major et verior esset humilitatis.

[*The clergy should not desert their flocks, for in times of danger how great a concourse to them of those who seek Baptism or Reconciliation. The exitium of those who die unbaptized or unreconciled.*]

Ep. ccxxviii.

[Migne, P. L., XXXIII. 1016.]

*Ad Honoratum.*

An non cogitamus, cum ad istorum periculorum pervenitur extrema, nec est potestas ulla fugiendi, quantus in ecclesia fieri soleat ab utroque sexu, atque ab omni ætate concursus; aliis baptismum flagitantibus, aliis reconciliationem, aliis etiam pœnitentiæ ipsius actionem, omnibus consolationem et sacramentorum confectionem et erogationem. Ubi si ministri desint, quantum exitium sequitur eos, qui de isto sæculo vel non regenerati exeunt vel ligati. Quantus est etiam luctus fidelium suorum, qui eos secum in vitæ æternæ requie non habebunt! quantus denique gemitus omnium, et quorundam quanta blasphemia de absentia ministeriorum et ministrorum. Vide quid faciat malorum temporalium timor, et quanta in eo sit acquisitio malorum æternorum. Si autem ministri adsint, pro viribus quas eis Dominus subministrat, omnibus subvenitur: alii baptizantur, alii reconciliantur, nulli Dominici corporis communione fraudantur.

[*Advantage of the presence of ministers.*]

Ep. ccxxviii.

[Migne, P. L., XXXIII. 1017.]

Certe jam vides quod te scripseras non videre quantum boni consequantur populi Christiani, si in præsentibus malis non eis desit præsentia ministrorum Christi: quorum vides etiam quantum obsit absentia, dum sua quærunt non quæ Jesu Christi.

**S. Augustine.**

[*When there is danger of attack some clerks should remain to render necessary ministrations to the lay-people.*]

*Ep. ccxxviii.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXXIII. 1018.]

In communi autem periculo vitæ hujus cur existimamus, ubicumque fuerit hostilis incursus, omnes clericos et non etiam omnes laicos esse morituros, ut simul finiant hanc vitam, cui sunt clerici necessarii? Aut cur non speremus sicut laicos aliquos, sic etiam clericos remansuros, a quibus eis necessarium ministerium valeat exhiberi.

[*Penitents after Baptism are those who have merited excommunication.*]

*Ep. cclxv.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXXIII. 1088.]

*Ad Seleucianam.*

Agunt etiam homines pœnitentiam, si post baptismum ita peccaverint, ut excommunicari et postea reconciliari mereantur: sicut in omnibus ecclesiis illi qui proprie pœnitentes appellantur. De tali enim pœnitentia locutus est apostolus Paulus, ubi ait: *Ne iterum cum venero humiliet me Deus apud vos; et lugeam multos ex iis qui ante peccaverunt, et non egerunt pœnitentiam super immunditia, et luxuria, et fornicatione quam egerunt; neque enim scribebat ista, nisi eis qui jam baptizati fuerant.*

[*For sin after Baptism the penitent having sought to reform is to come to the bishops who minister the keys, and to accept the satisfaction assigned, even if it be public.*]

*Sermo cccli.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXXIX. 1545.]

9. Et cum ipse in se protulerit severissimæ medicinæ, sed tamen medicinæ sententiam, veniat ad antistites, per quos illi in ecclesia claves ministrantur: et tanquam bonus jam incipiens esse filius, maternorum membrorum ordine custodito, a præpositis sacramentorum accipiat satisfactionis suæ modum; ut in offerendo sacrificio cordis contribulati devotus et supplex, id tamen agat quod non solum ipsi prosit ad recipiendam salutem, sed etiam cæteris ad exemplum. Ut si peccatum ejus, non solum in gravi ejus malo, sed etiam in tanto scandalo aliorum est, atque hoc expedire utilitati ecclesiæ videtur antistiti, in notitia multorum, vel etiam totius plebis agere pœnitentiam non recuset, non resistat, non lethali et mortiferæ plagæ per pudorem addat tumorem. Meminerit semper, quod *superbis Deus resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam.* Quid enim est infelicius, quid perversius, quam de ipso vulnere, quod latere non potest, non erubescere, et de ligatura ejus erubescere.



**S. Augustine.**

*[Many stained with sins do yet communicate. Penance not on this account to be lightly regarded.]*

*Sermo cœcli.*

*[Migne, P. L., XXXIX. 1545.]*

10. Nemo arbitretur, fratres, propterea se consilium salutiferæ hujus pœnitentiæ debere contemnere, quia multos forte advertit et novit ad sacramenta altaris accedere, quorum talia crimina non ignorat. Multi enim corriguntur, ut Petrus: multi tolerantur ut Judas: multi nesciuntur, donec veniat Dominus, qui illuminet abscondita tenebrarum, et manifestet cogitationes cordis.

*[Reasons why Christians do not inform of the sins of others which are known to them.]*

*Sermo cœcli.*

*[Migne, P. L., XXXIX. 1546.]*

10. Nam plerique propterea nolunt alios accusare, dum se per illos cupiunt excusare. Plerique autem boni christiani propterea tacent, et sufferunt aliorum peccata quæ noverunt, quia documentis sæpe deseruntur, et ea quæ ipsi sciunt, iudicibus ecclesiasticis probare non possunt. Quamvis enim vera sint quædam; non tamen iudici facile credenda sunt, nisi certis indiciis demonstrantur.

*[We cannot prohibit a person from communion except (a) on his confession, or (b) on his conviction by a civil or ecclesiastical judgment.]*

*Sermo cœcli.*

*[Migne, P. L., XXXIX. 1546.]*

10. Nos vero a communione prohibere quemquam non possumus (quamvis hæc prohibitio nondum sit mortalis, sed medicinalis), nisi aut sponte confessum, aut in aliquo sive sæculari, sive ecclesiastico iudicio nominatum atque convictum. Quis enim sibi utrumque audeat assumere, ut cuiquam ipse sit et accusator et iudex?

*[Penance in the Church as practised by those properly called penitents, is for grave offences, as adultery, homicide, or sacrilege.]*

*Sermo cœcli.*

*[Migne, P. L., XXXIX. 1558.]*

Restat pœnitentiæ tertium genus, unde aliquid breviter dicam, ut adjuvante Domino proposita et promissa persolvam. Est pœnitentia gravior atque luctuosior, in qua proprie vocantur in ecclesia pœnitentes, remoti etiam a Sacramento altaris participandi, ne accipiendo indigne, iudicium sibi manducent et bibant. Illa ergo pœnitentia luctuosa est. Grave vulnus est: adulterium forte commissum est, forte homicidium, forte aliquod sacrilegium, gravis res, grave vulnus, lethale, mortiferum: sed omnipotens medicus.

**S. Augustine.**

[*Offenders by secret sins of lust should do penance and seek absolution.*]

*Sermo cccxcii. (Hom. 49).* [Migne, P. L., XXXIX. 1711.]

Apertius dico: nemo dicat, Non intellexi. Qui post uxores vestras vos illicito concubitu maculastis, si præter uxores vestras cum aliqua concubuistis, Agite pœnitentiam, qualis agitur in Ecclesia, ut oret pro vobis Ecclesia. Nemo sibi dicat, Occulte ago, apud Deum ago, novit Deus qui mihi ignoscat quia in corde meo ago. Ergo sine causa dictum est, Quæ solveritis in terra soluta erunt in cœlo? Ergo sine causa sunt claves datæ Ecclesiæ Dei? Frustramus evangelium? Frustramus verba Christi? Promittimus vobis quod ille negat?

[*Uncertainty of the future of those who defer penitence till death. Importance of undertaking penance while in health.*]

*Sermo cccxciii.* [Migne, P. L., XXXIX. 1714.]

Quod dico attendite: debeo illud planius exponere, ne me aliquis male intelligat. Numquid dico, Damnabitur? Non dico. Sed nec dico etiam, Liberabitur. Et quid dicis mihi? Nescio: non præsumo, non promitto; nescio. Vis te de dubio liberare? vis quod incertum est evadere? Age pœnitentiam, dum sanus es. Si enim agis veram pœnitentiam, dum sanus es, et invenerit te novissimus dies, curre ut reconcilieris: si sic agis, securus es. Quare securus es? Quia egisti pœnitentiam eo tempore, quo et peccare potuisti. Si autem tunc vis agere pœnitentiam ipsam, quando jam peccare non potes: peccata te dimiserunt, non tu illa. Sed unde scis, inquis, ne forte Deus dimittat mihi? Verum dicis. Unde, nescio. Illud scio, hoc nescio. Nam ideo tibi do pœnitentiam, quia nescio. Nam si scirem tibi nihil prodesse, non tibi darem. Item si scirem tibi prodesse, non te admonerem, non te terrerem. Duæ res sunt: aut ignoscitur tibi, aut non ignoscitur: quid horum tibi futurum sit, nescio. Ergo dimitte incertum, tene certum.

[*Differences of sins. For some sins definite penances are required: other sins are venial. For venial sins, though the persons confess them, they are not to be forced to grievous penance. For others no salvation to be hoped unless the sinners offer to God a spirit bruised by penance.*]

*De Diversis Quæstionibus lxxviii.*

9. 26.

[Migne, P. L., XL. 17.]

*De differentia peccatorum.*

Alia sunt peccata infirmitatis, alia imperitiæ, alia malitiæ. Infirmitas contraria est virtuti, imperitia contraria est sapientiæ, malitia contraria est bonitati. Quisquis igitur novit quid sit



**S. Augustine.**

virtus et sapientia Dei, potest existimare quæ sint peccata venialia. Et quisquis novit quid sit bonitas Dei, potest existimare quibus peccatis certa pœna debeatur et hic et in futuro sæculo. Quibus bene tractatis, probabiliter judicari potest, qui non sint cogendi ad pœnitentiam luctuosam et lamentabilem, quamvis peccata fateantur; et quibus nulla omnino operanda sit salus, nisi sacrificium obtulerint Deo spiritum contribulatum per pœnitentiam.

[Those who think that all other sins are met by almsgiving, yet reserve for Penance impurity, idolatry, and homicide. To inquire whether their opinion is correct would involve too long a task.]

Cap. 19.

[Migne, P. L., XL. 220.]

*De Fide et Operibus.*

Qui autem opinantur cætera eleemosynis facile compensari, tria tamen mortifera esse non dubitant et excommunicationibus punienda, donec pœnitentia humiliore sanentur, impudicitiam, idololatriam, homicidium. Neque nunc opus est quærere qualis sit eorum ista sententia, et utrum corrigenda, an approbanda, ne opus susceptum mittamus in longum. . . .

[Three grades of sins.]

Cap. 26.

[Migne, P. L., XL. 228.]

Sed nisi essent quædam ita gravia, ut etiam excommunicatione plectenda sint, non diceret Apostolus, *Congregatis vobis et meo spiritu tradere ejusmodi satanæ in interitum carnis, ut spiritus salvus sit in die Domini Jesu.* Unde etiam dicit: *Ne lugeam multos, qui ante peccaverunt, et non egerunt pœnitentiam super immunditiam et fornicationem quam gesserunt.* Item nisi essent quædam non ea humilitate pœnitentiæ sananda, qualis in Ecclesia datur eis qui proprie pœnitentes vocantur, sed quibusdam correptionum medicamentis, non diceret ipse Dominus: *Corripe eum inter te et ipsum solum; et si te audierit, lucratus es fratrem tuum.* Postremo nisi essent quædam sine quibus hæc vita non agitur, non quotidianam medelam poneret in oratione quam docuit, ut dicamus. *Dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris.*

[Of the Penance in the Church for the Remission of Sins.]

[Migne, P. L., XL. 262.]

Cap. 65. *Enchiridion, sive De Fide, Spe, et Charitate.*

Sed neque de ipsis criminibus quamlibet magnis remittendis in sancta ecclesia, Dei misericordia desperanda est agentibus pœnitentiam secundum modum sui cujusque peccati. In actione autem pœnitentiæ, ubi tale commissum est, ut is qui commisit a Christi etiam corpore separetur, non tam considerata est mensura temporis quam doloris. Cor enim contritum et humiliatum

**S. Augustine.**

Deus non spernit. Verum quia plerumque dolor alterius cordis occultus est alteri, neque in aliorum notitiam per verba vel quæcumque alia signa procedit; cum sit coram illo cui dicitur, *Gemitus meus a te non est absconditus*: recte constituuntur ab iis qui ecclesiis præsumt tempora pœnitentiæ, ut fiat satis etiam ecclesiæ, in qua remittuntur ipsa peccata; extra eam quippe non remittuntur. Ipsa namque proprie Spiritum sanctum pignus accepit sine quo non remittuntur ulla peccata, ita ut quibus remittuntur, consequantur vitam æternam.

[*Of temporal penalties.*]

Cap. 66.

[Migne, P. L., XL. 263.]

Multa etiam hic videntur ignosci et nullis suppliciis vindicari: sed eorum pœnæ reservantur in posterum. Neque enim frustra ille proprie dicitur dies iudicii, quando venturus est iudex vivorum atque mortuorum. Sicut e contrario vindicantur hic aliqua, et tamen si remittuntur, profecto in futuro sæculo non nocebunt. Propterea de quibusdam temporalibus pœnis, quæ in hac vita peccantibus irrogantur, eis quorum peccata delentur, ne reserventur in finem, ait Apostolus: *Si enim nos ipsos iudicaremus, a Domino non iudicaremur: cum iudicamur autem a Domino corripimur, ne cum hoc mundo damnemur.*

[*The Novatianists do not admit that the power of the keys is committed to the Church.*]

[Migne, P. L., XL. 308.]

*De Agone Christiano.*

Nec eos audiamus, qui negant ecclesiam Dei omnia peccata posse dimittere. Itaque miseri, dum in Petro petram non intelligant, et nolunt credere datas ecclesiæ claves regni cœlorum, ipsi eas de manibus amiserunt. Isti sunt qui viduas, si nupserint, tanquam adulteras damnant, et super doctrinam apostolicam se prædicant esse mundiores. Qui nomen suum si vellent agnoscere, mundanos se potius quam mundos vocarent. Nolentes enim si peccaverint corrigi, nihil aliud elegerunt, nisi cum hoc mundo damnari. Nam quibus veniam peccatorum negant, non eos aliqua sanitate custodiunt, sed ægris subtrahunt medicinam; et viduas suas uri cogunt, quas nubere non permittunt. Non enim prudentiores habendi sunt, quam Paulus apostolus, qui maluit eas nubere, quam uri.

[*Three modes of pardon, Baptism, prayer, Penance. But only available for the baptized.*]

[Migne, P. L., XL. 636.]

*De Symbolo ad Catechumenos.*

8. Ergo tribus modis dimittuntur peccata in Ecclesia; in baptisate, in oratione, in humilitate maiore pœnitentiæ: tamen



**S. Augustine.**

Deus non dimittit peccata, nisi baptizatis. Ipsa peccata quæ primum dimittit, non nisi baptizatis dimittit. Quando? Quando baptizantur. Peccata quæ postea orantibus dimittuntur et pœnitentibus, quibus dimittit, baptizatis dimittit. Nam quomodo dicant *Pater noster*, qui nondum nati sunt? Catechumeni quamdiu sunt, super illos sunt omnia peccata eorum. Si catechumeni, quanto magis Pagani? quanto magis hæretici? Sed hæreticis baptismum non mutamus. Quare? Quia sic habent baptismum quomodo desertor habet characterem: ita et isti habent baptismum; habent, sed unde damnentur, non unde coronentur. Et tamen si desertor ipse correctus incipiat militare, numquid audet quisquam ei characterem mutare?

[*After Baptism prayer suffices for venial sins. Those who are seen doing penance have committed grave offences.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XL. 636.]

15. Cum baptizati fueritis, tenete vitam bonam in præceptis Dei, ut baptismum custodiatis usque in finem. Non vobis dico quia sine peccato hic vivetis: sed sunt venialia, sine quibus vita ista non est. Propter omnia peccata baptismus inventus est; propter levia, sine quibus esse non possumus, oratio inventa. Quid habet oratio? *Dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris.* Semel abluimur baptismo, quotidie abluimur oratione. Sed nolite illa committere, pro quibus necesse est ut a Christi corpore separemini: quod absit a vobis. Illi enim quos videtis agere pœnitentiam, scelera commiserunt, aut adulteria, aut aliqua facta immania: inde agunt pœnitentiam. Nam si levia peccata ipsorum essent, ad hæc quotidiana oratio delenda sufficeret.

[*The laying on of hands is a prayer over a man.*]

Lib. iii. c. 16.

[Migne, *P. L.*, XLIII. 149.]

*De Baptismo contra Donatistas.*

Manus autem impositio non sicut baptismus repeti non potest. Quid est enim aliud nisi oratio super hominem?

[*If in the reception of heretics there were no laying on of hands they would seem to be accounted free of fault.*]

Lib. v. c. 23.

[Migne, *P. L.*, XLIII. 194.]

Itaq̃e sicut potest baptisma esse et unde se aufert Spiritus sanctus; ita potest esse baptisma ubi non est Ecclesia. Manus autem impositio, si non adhiberetur ab hæresi venienti, tanquam extra omnem culpam esse judicaretur: propter charitatis autem copulationem, quod est maximum donum Spiritus sancti, sine quo non valent ad salutem quæcumque alia sancta in homine fuerint, manus hæreticis correctis imponitur.

**S. Augustine.**

[*No penalty greater than the episcopal sentence.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XLIV. 944.]

*De Correptione et Gratia.*

15. Corripiantur itaque a præpositis suis subditi fratres correptionibus de charitate venientibus, pro culparum diversitate diversis, vel minoribus vel amplioribus. Quia et ipsa quæ damnatio nominatur, quam facit episcopale iudicium, qua pœna in ecclesia nulla major est, potest, si Deus voluerit, in correptionem saluberrimam cedere atque proficere.

[*Even in the Church no second opportunity of Penance.*]

**Macedonius**, vicar of Africa (A.D. 414).

[Migne, *P. L.*, XXXIII. 652.]

*Ad Augustinum.*

Officium sacerdotii vestri esse dicitis intervenire pro reis, et nisi obtineatis, quasi quod erat officii vestri minime reportetis. Hic ego vehementer ambigo utrum istud ex religione descendat. Nam si a Domino peccata adeo prohibentur, ut ne pœnitendi quidem copia post primam tribuatur; quemadmodum nos possumus ex religione contendere ut nobis quaecumque illud crimen fuerit, dimittatur? quod utique, cum impunitum volumus, probamus.

[*In the absence of the bishop a sick penitent may be reconciled by a priest, acting on the bishop's instructions.*]

**Codex Canonum Ecclesiæ Africanæ.**

*Can. 7.*

[Mansi, III. 711.]

Aurelius episcopus dixit: Si quisquam in periculo fuerit constitutus, et se reconciliari divinis altaribus petierit: si episcopus absens fuerit, debet utique presbyter consulere episcopum, et sic periclitantem ejus præcepto reconciliare: quam rem debemus salubri consilio roborare. Ab universis episcopis dictum est: Placet quod sanctitas vestra necessario nos instruere dignata est.

[*No imposition of hands for priests or deacons after grave offence involving removal from office. The rebaptized not to be made clerks.*]

*Can. 27.*

[Mansi, III. 728.]

Item confirmatum est, ut si quando presbyteri vel diaconi in aliqua graviore culpa convicti fuerint, qua eos a ministerio necesse sit removeri, non eis manus tanquam pœnitentibus, vel tanquam fidelibus laicis, imponatur; neque permittendum, ut rebaptizati ad clericatus gradum promoveantur.



**Codex Canonum Ecclesiæ Africanæ.**

[*Bishops to assign terms of penance according to the sins. A priest not to reconcile without necessity. In reconciliation for public offences, the imposition of the hand to be before the apse.*]

Can. 43.

[Mansi, III. 735.]

Ut pœnitentibus secundum differentiam peccatorum episcopi arbitrio pœnitentiæ tempora decernantur: et ut presbyter inconsulto episcopo non reconciliet pœnitentem, nisi absentiae episcopi necessitate cogente. Cujuscumque autem pœnitentis publicum et vulgatissimum crimen est, quod universam ecclesiam commoverit, ante absidem manus ei imponatur.

[*Sick persons unable to respond may be baptized if their intention is witnessed by their friends. Actors may be reconciled at death.*]

Can. 45.

[Mansi, III. 735a.]

Ut ægrotantes, si pro se respondere non possunt, cum voluntatis eorum testimonium sui periculo proprio dixerint, baptizentur. Ut scenicis, atque histrionibus ceterisque hujusmodi personis<sup>1</sup> reconciliatio non negetur.

[*Case of a bishop who has received the confession of a sin from one who afterwards denies it.*]

Can. 132.

[Mansi, III. 827.]

Item placuit, ut si quando episcopus dicit aliquem sibi soli proprium crimen fuisse confessum, atque ille neget, et pœnitere noluerit; non putet ad injuriam suam episcopus pertinere, quod illi soli non creditur, etsi scrupulo propriæ conscientiæ se dicit neganti nolle communicare.

[*Penitents not to be ordained. Penalties.*]

**Statuta Ecclesiæ Antiqua.**

68 (84).

[Mansi, III. 956; Migne, P. L., LVI. 887.]

Ex pœnitentibus (quamvis sit bonus) clericus non ordinetur. Si per ignorantiam episcopi factum fuerit, deponatur a clero, quia se ordinationis tempore non prodidit fuisse pœnitentem. Si autem sciens episcopus ordinaverit talem, etiam ab episcopatus sui ordinandi dumtaxat potestate privetur.

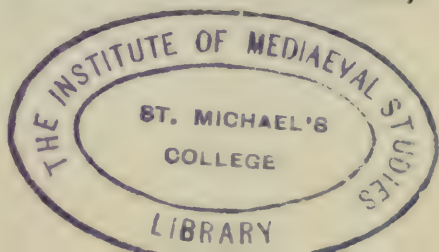
[*The sacerdos to enjoin the laws of Penance without respect of persons.*]

74 (18).

[Mansi, III. 957; Migne, P. L., LVI. 882.]

Ut sacerdos pœnitentiam imploranti, absque personæ acceptione, pœnitentiæ leges injungat.

<sup>1</sup> The Greek version (before the Trullan council) inserts ἡ ἀποστάταις, μετανοοῦσι καὶ ἐπιστρέφουσι πρὸς τὸν Θεόν.



**Statuta Ecclesiæ Antiqua.**

[*Those negligent in their penance to be kept longer.*]

75 (19). [Mansi, III. 957; Migne, *P. L.*, LVI. 882.]

Ut negligentiores pœnitentes (negligentes pœnitentiam) tardius recipiantur.

[*The reconciliation of penitents in sickness. The sacerdos assigns the duration of satisfaction if the sick man recover.*]

76 (20). [Mansi, III. 957; Migne, *P. L.*, LVI. 882.]

Is qui pœnitentiam in infirmitate petit, si casu, dum ad eum sacerdos invitatus venit, oppressus infirmitate obmutuerit, vel in phrenesim versus fuerit, dent testimonium qui eum audierunt, et accipiat pœnitentiam. Et si continuo creditur moriturus, reconcilietur per manus impositionem, et infundatur ori ejus eucharistia. Si supervixerit, admoneatur a supradictis testibus petitioni suæ satisfactum; et subdatur statutis pœnitentiæ legibus, quamdiu sacerdos, qui pœnitentiam dedit, probaverit.

[*Sick penitents may receive the Viaticum.*]

77. [Mansi, III. 957.]

Pœnitentes qui in infirmitate sunt, viaticum accipiant.

[*If a penitent, who has received the Viaticum, recover, he is to seek absolution by imposition of hands.*]

78 (21). [Mansi, III. 957; Migne, *P. L.*, LVI. 883.]

Pœnitentes qui in infirmitate viaticum Eucharistiæ acceperint, non se credant absolutos sine manus impositione, si supervixerint.

[*Worthy penitents who have died, are to be commemorated in prayers and oblations.*]

79 (22). [Mansi, III. 957; Migne, *P. L.*, LVI. 883.]

Pœnitentes qui attente leges pœnitentiæ exequuntur, si casu in itinere vel in mari mortui fuerint, ubi eis subveniri non possit, memoria eorum et orationibus et oblationibus commendetur.

[*Imposition of hands in Lent.*]

80 (65). [Mansi, III. 957; Migne, *P. L.*, LVI. 886.]

Omni tempore jejunii manus pœnitentibus a sacerdotibus imponatur.

[*Penitents to bring the dead to the church and bury them.*]

81 (66). [Mansi, III. 957; Migne, *P. L.*, LVI. 886.]

Mortuos pœnitentes ecclesiæ afferant et sepeliant.

[*Penitents are to kneel even on days of "remission."*]

82 (67). [Mansi, III. 957; Migne, *P. L.*, LVI. 886.]

Pœnitentes etiam diebus remissionis genua flectant.



**Statuta Ecclesiæ Antiqua.**

[*Not to prohibit even the heathen from hearing the word of God.*]

84 (16.) [Mansi, III. 958; Migne, *P. L.*, LVI. 882.]

Ut Episcopus nullum prohibeat ingredi Ecclesiam, et audire verbum Dei, sive Gentilem, sive Hæreticum, sive Judæum usque ad Missam Catechumenorum.

[*The Donatists (as others?) use imposition of hands for the forgiveness of sins, and then turning to the altar, say the Lord's Prayer.*]

**S. Optatus**, bishop of Milevis (c. A.D. 375).

[Migne, *P. L.*, XI. 975.]

*Lib. ii. c. 20. De Schismate Donatistarum.*

Cum enim seducitis aliquos, promittitis vos indulgentiam peccatorum esse daturos: et cum vultis donare peccata, vestram profitemini innocentiam: et remissionem peccatorum sic datis, quasi nullum habeatis ipsi peccatum. Non est ipsa præsumptio, sed deceptio: nec veritas, sed mendacium. Etenim inter vicina momenta, dum manus imponitis, et delicta donatis, mox ad altare conversi, dominicam orationem prætermittere non potestis.

[*The Donatists use imposition of hands and penitential veils for all Catholics.*]

*Lib. ii. c. 24.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, XI. 979.]

Extendistis enim manum, et super omne caput mortifera velamina prætendistis.

*c. 26.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, XI. 986.]

Utique sub cubitibus et sub manibus vestris, et cum superiorum vel earum capita velamina pœnitentiæ tenditis.

[*The Donatists practise associated or indiscriminate penance.*]

*Lib. ii. c. 26.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, XI. 986.]

Matronæ, pueri simul et virgines a vobis coactæ, nullo interveniente peccato, salva innocentia et pudicitia, vobis docentibus pœnitentiam gerere didicerunt. Numquid minor est infelicitas? contrivistis sexus, vexastis ætates. Vere de vobis dictum est in psalmo xiii: *Contritio et infelicitas in viis eorum, et viam pacis non cognoverunt: non est timor Dei ante oculos eorum.* Indixistis pœnitentiam plebibus; nec enim acta est ab aliquo, sed a vobis exacta; nec æqualibus temporum spatiis, sed egistis omnia pro personis, alter anno toto, alter mense, alter vix tota die, imperantibus vobis pœnitentiam gessit. Si unitati consentire (ut vultis) peccatum est, si est similis culpa; quare non est æqualis pro

**S. Optatus.**

eodem reatu pœnitentia? Dubium non est, populum credentium Israel esse vocatum; plebes singulas filias Israel, id est, qui mente Deum viderint, et Deo crediderint: et tamen has plebes coegistis flectere et inclinare cervices, et serie capitum juncta, massam pœnitentium facere. Has plebes dolet Deus per Ezechielem Prophetam dicens: *Væ filiabus, quæ sarciunt cervicalia*, id est membra cervicis ut supponant sub cubito et sub manu. Utique sub cubitibus et sub manibus vestris, et cum super eorum vel earum capita velamina pœnitentiæ tenditis. Quæ impietas vestra et furor ostensus est, et superbia demonstrata: etiam stultitia fuerat revelanda; sed hanc in sexto libro demonstrabo.

## SPAIN AND GAUL

*[Would that Penance were not needed by any of the faithful! But if the serpent have the venom, shall not Christ have the medicine?]*

**S. Pacian**, bishop of Barcelona (*ob.* A.D. 390).

*Ep. i.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIII. 1055.]

*Ad Sympronianum.*

De pœnitentia vero, Deus præstet ut nullis fidelibus necessaria sit; nemo post sacri fontis auxilium, foveam mortis incurrat: nec tarda solamina ingerere sacerdotes aut docere cogantur, ne peccandi iter aperiant, dum peccanti remediis blandiuntur.

Habetne tam diutinum serpens venenum, et Christus non habet medicinam? Diabolus in mundo interficit, Christus hic non potest subvenire?

*[God would not threaten the impenitent unless He would forgive the penitent. It is God's power which is exercised through His priests. The commission was not to the Apostles alone.]*

*Ep. i.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIII. 1057.]

Sed pœnitere non licuit. Nemo sine fructu imperat laborem: *Dignus est enim mercenarius mercede sua*. Numquam Deus non pœnitenti comminaretur, nisi ignosceret pœnitenti. Solus hoc, inquires, Deus poterit. Verum est; sed et quod per sacerdotes suos facit, ipsius potestas est. Nam quid est illud quod Apostolis dicit: *Quæ ligaveritis in terris, ligata erunt et in cœlis*, et quæcumque solveritis in terris, soluta erunt et in cœlis? Cur hoc si ligare hominibus ac solvere non licebat? Ergo et baptizare solis licet, et Spiritum sanctum dare solis, et solis gentium peccata purgare: quia totum hoc, non aliis quam Apostolis imperatum est.



**S. Pacian.**

[*The Novatianist treatise of Sympronianus has three propositions :-*

1. *Penance after Baptism is inadmissible.*
2. *The Church cannot remit mortal sin.*
3. *The Church perishes herself if she receives sinners.]*

Ep. iii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIII. 1063.]

*Pacianus episcopus Symphroniano fratri salutem.*

Tractatus omnis Novatianorum quem ad me confertis undique propositionibus destinasti, Symphroniane frater, hoc continet: Quod post baptismum pœnitere non liceat; quod mortale peccatum Ecclesia donare non possit; immo quod ipsa pereat recipiendo peccantes. Præclarus honos, singularis auctoritas, magna constantia; rejicere nocentes, attactus peccantium fugere innocentiae suæ male confidere.

[*It is the power of Christ which the bishop exercises in Absolution as in Baptism.*]

Ep. iii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIII. 1067.]

Nescio, ais, an remitti peccatum ab episcopis possit, cum dixerit Dominus: *Qui me negaverit coram hominibus, negato eum coram Patre meo qui in cœlis est.*

Sed pœnitenti, inquires, peccata dimittis; cum tantum in baptismo tibi liceat relaxare peccatum. Non mihi plane, sed Deo soli, qui et in baptismo donat admissum, et pœnitentium lacrymas non repellit. Cæterum quod ego facio, id non meo jure, sed Domini.

Quare sive baptizamus, sive ad pœnitentiam cogimus, seu veniam pœnitentibus relaxamus; Christo id auctore tractamus. Tibi videndum est, an Christus hoc possit, an Christus hoc fecerit.

[*The power of binding is given to the bishops.*]

Ep. iii.

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIII. 1070.]

Jam quam argute caput illud absolvis, quod ego posui; datam episcopis potestatem, ut quae ligassent in terra, ligata essent et in cœlis.

[*Of those persons who have committed mortal sin, but conceal their sin, and communicate.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIII. 1083.]

*Parænesis ad Pœnitentiam.*

Tum de his fidelibus dicam qui remedium suum erubescentes male verecundi sint, et inquinato corpore ac polluta mente communicant: in conspectu hominum timidissimi: ante Dominum

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vero impudentissimi, profanis manibus et polluto ore contaminant, sanctis quoque et angelis altare metuendum.

[*Three capital sins are condemned by the Apostolic Decree : other sins may be met by the exercise of the contrary virtues.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIII. 1083.]

Primum igitur, ut diximus, de modo peccantium retractemus, sedulo requirentes quæ sint peccata, quæ crimina : ne quis existimet, propter innumera delicta quorum fraudibus nullus immunis est, me omne hominum genus indiscreta pœnitendi lege constringere. . . . Quæ sint autem ista videamus.

Post Domini passionem Apostoli, tractatis omnibus atque discussis, epistolam tradiderunt, his qui ex gentibus crediderant, perferendam. Cujus epistolæ sententia hæc fuit : *Apostoli et presbyteri fratres, his qui sunt Antiochiæ et Syriæ, et Ciliciæ fratribus qui sunt ex gentibus, salutem. Quoniam audivimus quosdam ex nobis exiisse, et conturbasse vos verbis. Item infra : Visum est enim Sancto Spiritui et nobis, nullum amplius imponi vobis pondus præter quam : Necessè est ut abstineatis vos ab idolothytis et sanguine et fornicatione : a quibus observantes, bene agetis. Valetè.* Hæc est Novi Testamenti tota conclusio. Despectus in multis Spiritus Sanctus, hæc nobis capitalis periculi conditione legavit. Reliqua peccata meliorum operum compensatione curantur : hæc vero tria crimina, ut basilisci alicujus afflatus, ut veneni calix, ut lethalis arundo, metuenda sunt : non enim vitiare animam, sed intercipere noverunt. Quare tenacitas humanitate redimetur ; convicium satisfactione pensabitur ; tristitia jucunditate ; asperitas lenitate ; gravitate levitas ; honestate perversitas ; et quæcumque contrariis emendata proficiunt. Quid vero faciet contemptor Dei ? Quid aget sanguinarius ? Quod remedium capiet fornicator ? Numquid aut placare Dominum desertor ipsius poterit ; aut conservare sanguinem suum, qui fudit alienum ; aut redintegrare Dei templum, qui illud fornicando violavit. Ista sunt capitalia, fratres ; ista mortalia.

[*Penance not imposed for all sins.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIII. 1083.]

Primum, ut de modo criminum edisseram, ne quis existimet omnibus omnino peccatis summum discrimen impositum.

[*Of those who withhold confession and penance, yet communicate.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIII. 1085.]

Vos ergo primum appello, fratres, qui criminibus admissis pœnitentiam recusatis : vos, inquam, post impudentiam timidos, post peccata verecundos, qui peccare non erubescitis et erubescitis confiteri : qui cum mala conscientia, Dei sancta contingitis, et



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altare Domini non timetis : qui ad manus sacerdotis, qui in conspectu angelorum sub fiducia innocentiae acceditis : qui divinae patientiae insultatis ; qui tacenti Dei, veluti nescienti, pollutam animam et profanum corpus ingeritis.

[*Of those who make a good confession but withhold the acts of exomologesis.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIII. 1083.]

Tertio, de his erit sermo, qui confessis bene apertisque criminibus remedia pœnitentiae, actusque ipsos exomologesis administrandæ, aut nesciunt aut recusant.

[*Of those who make a good confession, but no more.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIII. 1086.]

Nunc ad eos sermo sit, qui bene et sapienter vulnera sua, pœnitentiae nomine confitentes ; nec quid sit pœnitentia, nec quæ vulnerum medicina, noverunt.

[*The actual conduct of those who should be penitents.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIII. 1087.]

Quid dicitis, pœnitentes ? Ubi est vestrae carnis interitus ? An quod in ipsa pœnitentia lautiores semper inceditis, convivio parti, balneis expoliti, veste compositi ? . . .

Non desunt tamen vobis hortulani maritimive secessus, et exquisitius vinum, et lautiora convivia, et defæcatio senectutis. . . .

Non dico illa quæ congregamus ad cumulum, cauponando, mercando, rapiendo ; foris lucra, intus libidines aucupando ; nihil agendo simpliciter, nihil pauperibus largiendo, nihil fratribus remittendo.

[*What should be the conduct of penitents.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIII. 1088.]

Ne hæc quidem quæ videri etiam a sacerdote possunt et episcopo teste laudari ; ne hæc quidem quotidiani servamus ; flere in conspectu ecclesiae, perditam vitam sordida veste lugere, jejunare, orare, provolvi : si quis ad balneum vocet, recusare delicias : si quis ad convivium roget, dicere : Ista felicibus, ego deliqui in Dominum, et periclitor in æternum perire : quo mihi epulas, qui Dominum læsi ? Tenere præterea pauperum manus, viduas obsecrare, presbyteris advolvi, exoratricem ecclesiam deprecari, omnia prius tentare quam pereas.

[*The punishment due to such unworthy communicants.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIII. 1085.]

Cum judicamur, inquit, a Domino corripimur, ut non cum hoc mundo damnemur. Lætare, peccator, si in hoc sæculo aut morte

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interciperis, aut languore consumeris, ne puniaris post sæculum. Intellige quantum sceleris admittat qui ad altare venit indignus; cui pro remedio computatur, cum aut morbis laborat, aut morte dissolvitur.

[*Some not gravely culpable accept grave mortifications. Let grave sinners who avoid mortification expect Tartarus and hell.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIII. 1088.]

Scio quosdam ex fratribus et sororibus vestris cilicio pectus involvere, cineri incubare, jejunia sera meditari; et non talia, fortasse peccarunt. . . .

Nos ignita diaboli spicula nullo pœnitentiæ succo, nullo exomologesis gramine repellimus. . . .

Peccatoribus delicatis et pœnitentiam non agentibus, spiritus Domini comminatur. . . .

Timete, igitur, dilectissimi, justa judicia: omittite errorem, damnate delicias: properat jam tempus extremum, tartarus et gehenna laxatos impiis sinus pandunt.

[*There will be no opportunity for exomologesis in hell.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIII. 1089.]

Mementote, fratres, quia apud inferos exomologesis non est: nec pœnitentia tunc tribui poterit, consumpto tempore pœnitendi. Festinate, dum in vita estis, dum cum adversario iter facitis. Sæculares ecce ignes timemus, et carnificum ungulas expavescimus: comparate cum his æternas torquentium manus, apicesque flammarum nulla ætate morientium.

[*The three capital sins may be committed in the heart.*]

[Migne, *P. L.*, XIII. 1084.]

Multi etiam animo in hæc peccata ceciderunt. Multi sanguinis rei, multi idolis mancipati, multi adulteri. Addo etiam non solas manus in homicidio plecti, sed et omne consilium quod alterius animam impegit in mortem: nec eos tantum qui thura mensis adolevere profanis, sed omnem prorsus libidinem extra uxorium thorum et complexus licitos evagantem, reatu mortis astringi. Hæc quicumque post fidem fecerit, Dei faciem non videbit.

[*Penitents not admissible among the clergy. If already ordained to be placed among the sub-deacons. A penitent is one who after doing public penance for grave sins is reconciled to the altar.*]

**Concilium Toletanum I. (A.D. 400).**

*Can. 2.*

[Mansi, III. 998.]

Item placuit, ut de pœnitente non admittatur ad clerum, nisi tantum si necessitas aut usus exegerit, inter ostiarios deputetur,



**Concilium Toletanum I.**

vel inter lectores : ita ut evangelia et apostolum non legat. Si qui autem ante ordinati sunt diacones, inter subdiacones habeantur : ita ut manum non imponant, aut sacra non contingant : Pœnitente vero dicimus de eo, qui post baptismum, aut pro homicidio, pro diversis criminibus, gravissimisque peccatis publicam pœnitentiam gerens, sub cilicio, divino fuerit reconciliatus altario.

[*Dying penitents to be communicated without the reconciliatory imposition of the hand.*]

**Concilium Arausicanum I. (Orange, A.D. 441).**

Can. 3.

[Mansi, VI. 436.]

Qui recedunt de corpore, pœnitentia accepta, placuit sine reconciliatoria manus impositione eis communicari; quod morientis sufficit consolationi, secundum definitiones patrum, qui hujusmodi communionem congruenter viaticum nominarunt. Quod si supervixerint, stent in ordine pœnitentium, et ostensis necessariis pœnitentiæ fructibus, legitimam communionem cum reconciliatoria manus impositione percipiant.

[*Penance not to be denied to clerks who seek it.*]

Can. 4.

[Mansi, VI. 437.]

Pœnitentiam desiderantibus clericis non negandam.

[*Penance only to be given to the married on (mutual) consent.*]

**Concilium Arelatense II. (A.D. 443 or 452).**

Can. 22.

[Mansi, VII. 881.]

Pœnitentiam conjugatis non nisi ex consensu dandam.

[*Most sinners do not deign to redeem their sins by exomologesis and satisfaction, or even by gifts and acts of mercy.*]

**Salvianus**, priest of Marseilles (born before A.D. 400).

Ep. ix.

[Migne, P. L., LIII. 171.]

*Ad Salonium.*

Plurimi namque ac pene cuncti, et rerum abundantes, et conscii criminum ac flagitiorum suorum, non modo ea quæ admiserunt, exomologesi ac satisfactione, sed ne hoc quidem quod facillimum est, donis saltem ac misericordiis redimere dignantur : atque non solum id in prosperis negligunt, sed quod multum irreligiosius, in adversis; non solum incolumes, sed etiam deficientes.

[*S. Hilary's administration of Penance. It included (1) an admonition, (2) supplications, (3) the laying on of hands.*]

**S. Hilarii Arelatensis Vita** (A.D. 401–449).

[Migne, *P. L.*, L. 1233.]

*Cap. 13. Ab auctore ejusdem S. Hilarii discipulo scripta.*

Quotiescumque pœnitentiam dedit, sæpe die Dominico ad eum turba varia confluebat: volabat ad ejus castigationem, quicumque adesse volebat, lacrymarum se imbribus eluebat, cœlestibus judiciis territus, promissisque succensus; tanti gemitus, tanti fletus astantibus nascebantur, ut vitæ præsentis horreret habitaculum. Quis ita futuri judicii monstravit examen? Quis ita tenebrosum terribiliter intimavit incendium? Quis ita flumen exurentis pariter et rapientis cruciatus expressit? Quis ita vulnera conscientiae ante oculos inspicienda reduxit? Admonitione completa cum lacrymis supplicationum sumebat exordia, ut pœnitentiae fructum, quem monendo contulerat, orando firmaret. Nam mulier quædam cæca, dum manus ejus impositione benedicitur, visum se recepisse proclamat: æstimo quod antea interiori homini præstitit, quod exteriori postmodum impetravit. Quæ recepto lumine ducem viæ ulterius non quæsivit.

[*Monks to confess evil thoughts to their seniors at once.*]

**Joannes Cassianus** (c. A.D. 355–445).

*Lib. iv. c. 9.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, XLIX. 161.]

*De cœnobiorum institutis.*

Ad quod ut facile valeant pervenire, consequenter instituuntur nullas penitus cogitationes prurientes in corde perniciose confusione celare, sed confestim ut exortæ fuerint, eas suo patefacere seniori.

Generale namque et evidens indicium diabolicæ cogitationis esse pronuntiant si eam seniori confundamur aperire.

[*The eight principal vices.*]

*Lib. v. cap. 1.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, XLIX. 201.]

Quintus nobis, juvante Deo, liber iste procuditur. Nam post quatuor libellos, qui super institutis monasteriorum digesti sunt, nunc arripere collutationem adversus octo principalia vitia vestris orationibus, Domino confortante, disponimus, id est, primum gastrimargiæ, quæ interpretatur gulæ concupiscentia; secundum fornicationis; tertium philargyriæ, quod intelligitur avaritia, vel ut proprius exprimatur, amor pecuniæ; quartum iræ; quintum tristitiæ; sextum acediæ, quod est anxietas, sive tædium cordis; septimum cenodoxiæ, quod sonat vana seu inanis gloria; octavum superbiæ.



# THE MORAL CONDITION OF WESTERN CHRISTENDOM IN THE FIFTH CENTURY

[*Prevalence of major sins among Christians.*]

**Salvianus**, priest of Marseilles (born before A.D. 400).

*Lib. iii. c. 9.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, LIII. 66.]

## *De Gubernatione Dei.*

Porro autem nos omni studio, omni nisu, non solum jussa non facimus, sed contra id facimus, quod jubemur. Jubet enim Deus ut omnes nobis invicem chari simus: omnes autem nos mutua infestatione laceramus. Jubet Deus ut cuncti egentibus sua tribuant: cuncti admodum aliena pervadunt. Jubet Deus ut omnis qui Christianus est, etiam oculos castos habeat; quotus quisque est qui non se luto fornicationis involvat? Et quid plura? Grave et luctuosum est quod dicturus sum. Ipsa Ecclesia Dei, quæ in omnibus esse debet placatrix Dei, quid est aliud quam exacerbatrice Dei? aut præter paucissimos quosdam qui mala fugiunt, quid est aliud pene omnis cætus Christianorum quam sentina vitiorum? Quotum enim quemque invenies in Ecclesia non aut ebriosum, aut helluonem, aut adulterum, aut fornicatorem, aut raptorem, aut ganeonem, aut latronem, aut homicidam? et quod his omnibus pejus est, prope hæc cuncta sine fine. Interrogo enim Christianorum omnium conscientiam: ex his vel flagitiis vel scelerebus quæ nunc diximus, quotusquisque hominum non aliquid est horum, aut quotusquisque non totum? Facilius quippe invenias qui totum sit quam qui nihil. Et quod diximus nihil, nimis forsitan gravis videatur esse censuræ. Plus multo dicem. Facilius invenias reos malorum omnium quam non omnium; facilius majorum criminum quam minorum: id est, facilius qui et majora crimina cum minoribus, quam qui minora tantum sine majoribus perpetrarint.

[*The masters worse than the slaves in their promiscuous lusts.*]

*Lib. iv. c. 6.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, LIII. 77.]

Ecce enim ab hoc scelere vel maximo prope omnis servorum numerus immunis est. Numquid enim aliquis ex servis turbas concubinarum habet, numquid multarum uxorum labe polluitur, et canum vel suum more tantas putat conjuges suas esse, quantas potuerit libidini subjugare?

[*In the households of the well-to-do Christians of Aquitaine the wife was but one of many mistresses.*]

*Lib. vii. c. 3.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, LIII. 132.]

Apud Aquitanicos vero, quæ civitas in locupletissima ac nobilissima sui parte non quasi lupanar fuit? Quis potentum ac

**Salvianus.**

divitum non in luto libidinis vixit? Quis non se barathro sordidissime colluvionis immersit? Quis conjugii fidem reddidit? immo, quantum ad passivitatem libidinis pertinet, quis non conjugem in numerum ancillarum redegit, et ad hoc venerabilis connubii sacramenta deiecit ut nulla in domo ejus vilior videretur in maritali despectione, quam quæ erat princeps matrimonii dignitate.

[*Immorality of Spain.*

*Lib. vii. c. 7.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, LIII. 135.]

Hispanias nonne vel eadem vel majora forsitan vitia perdidit? . . . Dupliciter in illa Hispanorum captivitate ostendere Deus voluit, quantum et odisset carnis libidinem et diligeret castitatem, cum et Wandalos ob solam maxime pudicitiam superponeret, et Hispanos ob solam vel maxime impudicitiam subjugaret.

Haud multum enim matrona abest a vilitate servarum, ubi paterfamilias ancillarum maritus est. Quis autem Aquitanorum divitum non hoc fuit? Quem non sibi ancillæ impudicissimæ aut adulterum or maritum jure dixerunt?

[*The general depravity of the African Christians.*]

*Lib. vii. c. 15.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, LIII. 142.]

Gothorum gens perfida sed pudica est; Alanorum impudica, sed minus perfida; Franci mendaces sed hospitales; Saxones crudelitate efferi, sed castitate mirandi. Omnes denique gentes habent, sicut peculiaris mala, ita etiam quædam bona. In Afris pene omnibus nescio quid non malum. Si accusanda est inhumanitas, inhumani sunt; si ebrietas, ebriosi; si falsitas, fallacissimi; si dolus, fraudulentissimi; si cupiditas, cupidissimi; si perfidia, perfidissimi. Impuritas eorum atque blasphemia his omnibus admiscenda non sunt: quia illis quæ supra diximus malis, aliorum gentium vitia; his autem etiam sua ipsa vicerunt.

[*The prevalent impurity in Africa.*]

*Lib. vii. c. 16.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, LIII. 142.]

Quis non omnes omnino Afros generaliter sciat impudicos, nisi ad Deum forte conversos, id est, fide ac religione mutatos? Sed hoc tam rarum est ac novum, quam rarum videri potest quemlibet Gaium non esse Gaium, aut quemcunque Seium non esse Seium.



**Salvianus.**

[*The moral corruption of the Christians of Carthage.*]

*Lib. vii. c. 17.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, LIII. 145.]

Quis non fornicarius, non adulter, et hoc sine cessatione, sine termino? Rursum clamitem itaque necesse est. Quæ spes in illo populo esse poterat, ubi cum unus interdum adulter plebem ecclesiasticum polluat, ibi inter tot millia si diligentissime quæreret, castum vel in Ecclesia invenire vix posses. Plus multo dicam. Utinam hæc essent sola quæ diximus, et contenta illic virorum impuritas fuisset solis sordidarum mulierum fornicationibus inquinari! Illud gravius et scelestius, quod illa de quibus beatus apostolus Paulus, cum summa animi lamentatione conqueritur, in Afris pene omnia fuerunt; scilicet quia masculi, relicto naturali usu feminæ, exarserunt in desideriis suis in invicem, masculi in masculos turpitudinem exercentes, et mercedem quam oportuit erroris sui in semetipsis recipientes.

[*Many Christians at Carthage joined in the worship of the goddess Cælestis.*]

*Lib. viii. c. 2.*

[Migne, *P. L.*, LIII. 154.]

Illud perniciosius ac scelestius, quod multi eorum qui professionem Christo dicaverant, mente idolis serviebant. Quis enim non eorum qui Christiani appellabantur, cœlestem illam aut post Christum adorabit, aut, quod est pejus multo, antequam Christum. Quis non dæmoniacorum sacrificiorum nidore plenus divinæ domus limen introiit, et cum fetore ipsorum dæmonum, Christi altare conscendit, ut non tam immanis criminis fuisset ad templum Domini non venire quam sic venire. Quia Christianus qui ad ecclesiam non venit, negligentia reus est; qui autem sic venit, sacrilegii.

[*Memories of Paulinus of his lax morality in adolescence in his grandfather's house in Aquitaine.*]

**Paulinus of Pella** (c. A.D. 376–460).

[*Corpus Script. Eccl. Lat.*, XVI. 297; Vindobonæ, 1888.]

*v. 151.*

*Eucharisticos.*

Christi me munere fas est  
credere servatum, quod tum nescisse dolendum est,  
scilicet inlecebris urgentibus undique mundi,  
quas inter fluitans interque et vota parentum,  
iugiter in nostram tendentia posteritatem,  
iam prope sero calens ævi pro tempore nostri  
in nova prorupi iuvenalis gaudia luxus,  
quæ facile ante puer rebar me posse cavere.  
Attamen in quantum lasciva licentia cauto  
stricta coerceri potuit moderamine freni,

**Paulinus of Pella.**

congererem graviora meis ne crimina culpis,  
 hac mea castigans lege incentiva repressi,  
 invitam ne quando ullam iurisve alieni  
 adpeterem carumque memor servare pudorem  
 cedere et ingenuis oblati sponte caverem,  
 contentus domus inlecebris famulantibus uti,  
 quippe reus culpæ potius quam criminis esse  
 præponens famæque timens incurrere damna.

[*His confession, and his restoration to communion at Easter.*]

v. 468. [*Corpus Script. Eccl. Lat.*, XVI. 309; Vindobonæ, 1888.]

Confessusque igitur, penitenda quæ mihi horam,  
 proposita studui constrictus vivere lege,  
 non digno fortasse pians commissa labore,  
 sed rectam servare fidem non inscius ipse,  
 errorum discendo vias per dogmata prava,  
 quæ reprobans sociata aliis nunc respuo culpis,  
 post autem, exacta iam ter trieteride quinta,  
 rite recurrente statuto tempore pascha,  
 ad tua, Christe Deus, altaria sacra reversus  
 te miserante tua gaudens sacramenta recepi  
 ante hos ter decies super et bis quattuor annos.



## FROM A.D. 350 TO A.D. 450

### II. THE WESTERN CHURCHES

#### 5. *Rome and Milan.*

ROME, the ancient capital of the empire, retained and would **Rome.** continue to retain a certain pre-eminence over all other cities in it. But the shifting in the fourth century of the civil centre of gravity from Rome to Constantinople had some results for the Christian development of the city which have perhaps hardly been sufficiently remarked. That shifting was in point of time practically identical with the conversion of the empire, and the sweeping of the population into the Church. At the centre of the empire, now Constantinople, the vast influx of undigested elements may be said to have all but obliterated the outlines of the ancient Christian discipline, making it easy in a few years for the patriarch Nectarius to suppress the hardly surviving office of priest penitentiary with never a word said. In Rome, no longer the chief civil centre, the invasion of the world was not so overwhelming; the ancient outlines of discipline were not so readily effaced; and the struggle with the forces of licence was better sustained. It proved **Some penitential discipline preserved.** possible in Rome to preserve and to keep continuously in use some measure of penitential discipline.

For the period from A.D. 350 to A.D. 450 reference may be made **Authorities.** to S. Jerome, S. Siricius, S. Innocent I., S. Leo the Great, and Sozomen. The inquiry as to Rome may be supplemented by a study of the evidence afforded by S. Ambrose as to the neighbouring church of Milan.

S. Jerome was born about A.D. 346 at Stridon, a town near **S. Jerome.** Aquileia, but reckoned in Pannonia. As a young man he made his way to Rome to pursue his studies. Afterwards he is heard of as visiting for shorter or longer periods Gaul, Aquileia, Antioch, the desert of Chalcis, Antioch again, and Constantinople. From the spring of A.D. 382 to the August of A.D. 385 he was in Rome, and during this period worked in some capacity of student or secretary under Pope Damasus.<sup>1</sup> Jerome's strong personality and his advocacy of ascetic principles proved during this Roman sojourn great attractions to a little group of Roman ladies of position, who were dissatisfied with the life possible in Rome under the social

<sup>1</sup> *Quum in chartis ecclesiasticis juvarem Damasum, Ep. 123, 10.*

conditions of the day.<sup>1</sup> One of the ladies of his following was Fabiola,<sup>2</sup> a lady whose striking act of penance is narrated at some length by Jerome. She had been married to a man whose grave vices led her to divorce him. In this she appears to have been justified. Some time afterwards, however, she contracted another marriage, the first husband being still alive. At the time she does not seem to have realised that she was doing amiss. But after the death of the second husband, having now come under the influence of Jerome, she voluntarily accepted a public penance.

The fourth  
century in  
Rome.

With the penance of Fabiola under observation, it may be well to glance back over the preceding years of the fourth century, a period of considerable obscurity as regards the penitential discipline of the church of Rome. In the first decade of the century had occurred that passionate strife of factions, which in the episcopates of Marcellus and Eusebius (A.D. 307–309) had led to riot and bloodshed, and to the intervention of the civil magistrate. The party of Heraclius had insisted after the persecution under Diocletian that the reconciliation of the lapsed should be accorded without the requirement of serious penance. They had, in fact, demanded that the ready reconciliation which had been accorded in A.D. 252 in face of the impending persecution of Gallus should be accorded in A.D. 307. The Roman bishops or popes Marcellus and Eusebius had insisted on the requirement of penance as a condition of reconciliation. In other words, they reverted to the provisions of the Roman council of A.D. 251 as the normal provisions. Also in the presence of the distracted Catholic community the Novatianist sect pursued its way apart, probably in A.D. 307 still assigning penance, but not admitting reconciliation this side the grave.

The titles  
of Marcellus.

If the statement of the *Liber Pontificalis* may be accepted, it would appear that in the time of Marcellus the twenty-five titles or parishes of Rome were defined, and that parish priests were assigned to them with a view to (1) Baptism, (2) Penance, and (3) the care of the sepulchres of the martyrs. And it may well be that these parish priests of Rome, although the formal reconciliation of penitents was reserved to the bishop, were otherwise in the position of priests penitentiary, hearing confessions, and assigning penances, chiefly, it may be surmised, in the cases of persons who had lapsed in the persecution under Diocletian.

No graded  
penances.

At no time<sup>3</sup> is there found at Rome any trace of the system of graded penances which had come into force in the Asian provinces. But the firmness of Marcellus and Eusebius in demanding penance of the lapsed had established penance as a reality in Rome, and a letter of Pope Siricius (A.D. 384–398), to which reference will

<sup>1</sup> Paula, and her three daughters, Blesilla, Eustochium, and Paulina; Marcella, Principia, Asella, Lea, Furia, Marcellina, Felicitas.

<sup>2</sup> Fabiola is mentioned somewhat later than the others.

<sup>3</sup> As regards the letter of Felix III. in A.D. 488, see p. 542.



presently be made, discloses a startling rigour of disabilities incurred for the whole of the after life by any person who had undergone penance. These disabilities would obviously make less acceptable than ever any recurrence to Penance which the Church did not require, that is to say, for any offences not notorious and noted by authority. After disabilities.

In the eighty years which intervened between the days of Marcellus and the penance of Fabiola much had occurred. The seat of empire had shifted to Constantinople. Everywhere crowds had poured into the Christian Church when once the emperors had set the example. If the church of Rome had not been overpowered by outside influences to so great an extent as the church which now sprang into being at Constantinople, the change was yet sufficiently startling. In the place of the simple prelates whom the civil magistrate had with scant ceremony kept in order, such men as Damasus showed already the type too familiar in after ages of the noble or baronial bishop. The clergy, instead of showing the temper of the martyr priests of the Decian period, of a Moyses or a Maximus, were now, at least some of them, the curled and dainty exquisites of Jerome's satire.<sup>1</sup> Penance, as a voluntary act, seems to have been largely laid aside. It was plainly out of fashion. Relaxed temper of the Roman church.

Let attention now be given to the penance of Fabiola. S. Jerome's description in a letter to Oceanus may be transcribed at length. S. Letter to Oceanus. The penance of Fabiola.

"Who would believe this, that after the death of her second husband she, returning to herself, at a time when careless widows, the yoke of their submission thrown off, are wont to behave with greater freedom, to frequent the baths, to gad about the streets, to parade unchastened faces; she (Fabiola) put on sackcloth that she might publicly confess her fault; and with the whole city of Rome looking on, shortly before Easter in the basilica formerly of Leteranus, who was beheaded by the imperial sword, she stood in the rank of the penitents (*in ordine pœnitentium*), the bishop, the presbyters, and all the people weeping with her, and presented in submission dishevelled hair, a wan face, soiled hands, and a fouled neck. What sins may such a weeping not purge away? What deep-dyed stains may such laments not wash off? Peter wiped out a threefold denial by a threefold confession. . . .

"She laid bare to all her wound, and weeping Rome beheld the livid scar upon her person. The sides (of her dress) were unfastened, her head was bare, her mouth was closed. She did not enter the church of the Lord, but sat separated with Miriam the sister of Moses without the camp, for that whom the Priest (*Sacerdos*) had cast forth, he should recall. She

S. Jerome, *Ep.* 22, *crines calamistri vestigio rotantur.*

descended from the throne of her delicacies, she took the millstone, she ground the flour, and with bare feet she traversed streams of tears. She sat over coals of fire. They were for a help to her. Her face, by which she had pleased that second husband, she chastised: she hated gems, she could not bear to see fine linen, she avoided ornaments. She grieved in such sort as if she had committed adultery, and she desired to heal that one wound by repeated lavishing of remedies.

"We have lingered long upon her penitence, in which we grounded as in shallow places, that the field of her praises might lie open before us wider and without let. Received in communion in the sight of the whole church, what did she do? Verily in the day of her benefit she was not forgetful of her ills, and after her shipwreck she would not again tempt the dangers of a voyage."<sup>1</sup>

One great  
striking  
act.

It seems sufficiently clear that the act of penance here described is one great striking act of penance rather than a long-continued term of penitential observance. Yet there is a rank of penitents (*ordo pœnitentium*) in which she takes her place. She does so voluntarily. No one would have expected it. "Who would have believed?" says S. Jerome. The outward expression is still as in former time dramatic: the dishevelled hair, the soiled hands and face and neck, the bare head, the unfastened attire. There is here, as in the account of Sozomen, which will be considered farther on, that peculiar observance of Roman penitence, the ceremonial weeping in sympathy with the penitent by the bishop, the presbyters, and all the people. The reference to the *sacerdos* as the authority who had cast forth and should now recall is probably a reference to the bishop. By this time, indeed, the word *sacerdos* was not confined to bishops. But it was usual in Rome, as will appear, for the bishop to conduct an annual service of public reconciliation for penitents on the Thursday before Easter, and if the authority which "cast her forth" was the same authority as would now "recall her," we understand that the whole procedure in Fabiola's case was under the eye of the bishop, and controlled by him.

Reconcilia-  
tion at  
Rome.

It is not definitely stated by Jerome that Fabiola was received into communion by the bishop on the occasion of her striking act of penance. It is clear from Sozomen's account that the more ordinary procedure was that a penitential interval should elapse between the recognition of the sinner as a penitent Christian and his solemn absolution. Jerome, however, states that Fabiola's penance took place immediately before Easter (*ante diem paschæ*); and also that she was "received in communion in the sight of the whole church." S. Innocent I. a few years later will be found referring to the "custom of the Roman church" that remission

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* 77.



is to be made to penitents on the Thursday before Easter. It seems most probable, therefore, that Fabiola's penance had been arranged by the bishop to take place on that day, so that it might be followed immediately by her reception into communion "in the sight of the whole church."

In all this narrative there is no hint of long terms or of grades of penitential observance.

The next passage to be noticed is taken from S. Jerome's *Dialogus contra Luciferianos*. The Luciferians may or may not have attained to organised existence, but they were the followers of Lucifer, bishop of Calaris in Sardinia, who became prominent among leaders of Catholic conviction for an *intransigente* position of his own. He renounced communion with Catholics generally as being tainted by their diplomatic compliances with Arianism. With this attitude the Luciferians known to Jerome must be understood to have associated themselves. The dialogue written by S. Jerome purports to be maintained between a certain Helladius, a Luciferian, and an Orthodox (or Catholic) Christian. The Luciferian contends that Arians are not Christians, but *Gentiles*, and that the Catholic body which has accepted bishops from among the Arians has in fact accepted priests of heathen taint (*sacerdotes de capitolio*). He illustrates the unfitness of such bishops by reciting the requirements of their various ministrations. Coming to Penance he describes what a bishop has to do. It will be remembered that the description is in fact S. Jerome's, and that it gives a valuable testimony to the Roman practice.

*Dialogus  
contra  
Luci-  
ferianos.*

A bishop's  
office in  
penance.

"The bishop (*sacerdos*) indeed offers his oblation for the layman, imposes his hand upon the subject person, invokes the return of the Holy Spirit, and so with the pronouncement of a prayer before the people, reconciles to the altar him who had been delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved, nor does he restore one member to soundness before all the members have wept together with him."

In this passage the bishop is seen celebrating the Holy Eucharist, and in the course of the Liturgy directing his oblation for the penitent, and also laying his hand upon the penitent's head: he is also seen reconciling the offender to the altar with the pronouncement of a prayer before the people: and the Roman practice by which the whole congregation of the faithful wept in sympathy with the penitent finds special mention. It will be noted here on a point of difficult inquiry that the Roman practice includes a laying on of hands, but that this appears to be mentioned rather in connection with the prayers of the Liturgy for the penitent, than with the ceremony of his reconciliation, which finds expression in the pronouncement by the bishop of a prayer before the people.

What is  
the priest's  
part in  
absolu-  
tion?

With regard to the priest's part in absolution, Jerome makes statements at different times which are perhaps somewhat conflicting. In his *Commentary on the Epistle of Matthew* (xvi. 19) he almost appears to restrict the sentence given to a declaration of the actual moral condition of the person loosed or bound: but in his fourteenth epistle he says that "those who have the keys of the kingdom of heaven judge in a sort before the day of judgment."

Case of  
Sabinianus.

Among the letters of Jerome is found one to a certain Sabinianus.<sup>1</sup> This man was a deacon of the Roman church, who had had to leave Rome on account of an intrigue with the wife of a barbarian. The cause was not known to his bishop, who gave him letters of recommendation to S. Jerome at Bethlehem. At Bethlehem while exercising the office of a deacon he had again designed a similar offence, this time with a nun in the convent. Sabinianus had arranged for this woman to flee with him, but the scheme was discovered through a letter which Sabinianus had placed in a crevice of the altar, and which was brought to the notice of Jerome. Jerome in his letter writes as follows:—

"Accordingly thou liest prostrate at my knees, and to use thine own words, thou prayest to avert a *hemina* of blood. And, O wretched one, who hadst set aside the judgment of God, thou fearest me, only indeed as an avenger. I confess that I forgave thee, for what else could a Christian do to thee? I exhorted thee that thou shouldest do penance (*ageres pœnitentiam*), and shouldest roll in sackcloth and ashes, that thou shouldest seek solitude, that thou shouldest live in a monastery, that thou shouldest implore the mercy of God by ever-flowing tears."

A monastic  
penance.

The passage appears to imply that Jerome as the monastic superior might have inflicted grave corporal punishment, but that in fact he left it to Sabinianus to do penance as a voluntary penitent, such penance involving sackcloth and ashes, solitude of life, retirement to a monastery and perpetual tears.

It should be noted that as Sabinianus was a deacon, he was not by the ordinary practice of the Church a proper subject for the public penitential discipline of the Church. So far as Church discipline was concerned he would in the ordinary course have been deprived of the exercise of his sacred office, and reduced to take his place among the laity. But the penance which Jerome calls upon Sabinianus to accept by his voluntary act appears not to be properly the public penance of the Church discipline, but a private penance of monastic character. It was the infliction of a society, not of the Church. It is therefore interesting as an early example of monastic discipline. At a later date the Church will be found

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* 147.



borrowing certain features, notably the practice of devotional confession, from the established rules of the monastic societies.

It will have been noticed that the scene of the penance of Sabini-  
anus was not Rome, but Palestine: but the incident has been  
recorded here because both Jerome and Sabinianus were members  
of the Roman church, and the circumstances described may be  
taken as not falling outside the Roman temper.

Jerome has some interesting notices with regard to the attitude  
taken in his day alike by Montanists and by Novatianists towards  
the practice of Penance. It has already been remarked in these  
pages that Novatianism was no new temper in the time of Nova-  
tian, but only a new embodiment of the rigorist temper which  
had found place among Christians from Apostolic times, and which  
had in the time of Tertullian been loudly emphasised by the Mon-  
tanists. It appears that in Jerome's time, two hundred years later,  
the Montanists were still in prominence, and were still rigorists  
in the matter of penance. In a letter (41) to Marcella, one of the  
ladies of his Roman circle, Jerome explains the points of difference  
which divided the Montanists from the Church.

Montanists  
and Nova-  
tianists.

“They (the Montanists) bar the doors of the Church to  
almost every offence. We say daily, ‘I desire rather the  
penitence of a sinner than his death. . . .’ They are rigid  
not that they themselves may avoid sinning in worse things :  
but this difference exists between them and ourselves that  
they, as though just, blush to confess their sins : we, while  
we do penance (*pœnitentiam agimus*) are more readily found  
worthy of pardon.”

Again, in the letter (77) to Oceanus already referred to, Jerome  
alludes to Montanus and to Novatian, whom he calls Novatus, as  
the opponents of Penance.

From Jerome's *Commentary on the Epistle to Titus* it appears  
that in his day the Novatianists as well as the Montanists forbade  
second marriages. It will be seen that S. Augustine also refers  
to this.

The teaching of Jerome may be finally illustrated by a passage  
from his *Dialogue against the Pelagians*, in which, like so many other  
Christian writers, he sees the double operation of the forgiveness  
of sins (a) in Baptism and (b) in Penance.

Forgive-  
ness (a) in  
Baptism,  
(b) in Pen-  
ance.

“That which is written : *And the blood of Jesus Christ  
His Son cleanseth us from all sin*, is to be understood at once  
in the confession of Baptism, and in the clemency of Penance  
(*pœnitudinis*).”

S. Siricius succeeded Damasus as bishop of Rome, and was bishop  
from A.D. 384 to A.D. 398. His well-known letter to Himerius is  
the first of the papal decretals which is indisputably genuine.  
Himerius, who was bishop of Tarragona in Spain, had addressed

S. Siricius.

to Damasus a letter in which he asked for guidance on certain matters of discipline, and on certain abuses prevalent in the Spanish church. The letter was answered by Siricius.

Admits  
apostates  
to com-  
munion  
before  
death.

As regards apostates Siricius rules that they are to do penance during their lifetime, and only to be admitted to communion when at the point of death.<sup>1</sup> This had probably been the accepted position of the Roman church since the days of Marcellus and Eusebius.

Disabilities  
following  
penance.

The fifth section of the letter, which deals with the disabilities of penitents after they have been reconciled, may be cited at length.

“Thy love has not unsuitably believed that the apostolic see should be consulted concerning those who, their penance done, revert like dogs and swine to their former vomitings and swallowings, and to the belt of the military service, and to sportive pleasures and new marriages, and have desired anew forbidden cohabitation, whose incontinency sons born after absolution have betrayed and published. Of whom, because now they have not the refuge of Penance, we held this was to be decreed, that they should have part in the church with the faithful in the *Prayer* only, and should be present at the sacred celebration of the mysteries, although they deserve it not, but should be separated from the partaking of the Lord's table: that, constrained at least by this disability, they should both punish their faults in themselves, and should afford an example to others that they may be restrained from gross desires. It is, however, our wish that these persons, since they have fallen by fleshly frailty, should be relieved by the grace of communion as a gift for the journey (*viatico munere*) when they have started to go forth to the Lord. The same order we judge to be observed concerning women, who after penance have enchained themselves by such pollutions.”<sup>2</sup>

This section reveals a development of the penitential system which has not yet come under notice. Penance involves grave disabilities in the whole remaining term of life when the penance is done and the person restored to communion. No penitent may undertake military service. No penitent is to be found at the games of the circus. No penitent may after penance marry. No married penitents may after penance resume the cohabitation of marriage. The severity of these restrictions is startling. At the beginning of the fourth century in the Roman church under Marcellus and Eusebius the imposing of penance at all had involved a grave conflict of parties, which had resulted in riot and bloodshed. At the end of the century penance is not only an established observance for certain grave sins, but it involves these almost savage privations, even when the penance is finished, and the penitent restored.

<sup>1</sup> *Cap. 3.*

<sup>2</sup> *Cap. 5.*



It should be borne in mind that alongside of these grave disabilities there is traceable in the Christian community a grave moral declension. The moral condition of the Christian population at the close of the fourth century and in the early decades of the fifth, as evidenced by such writers as Salvianus and Paulinus of Pella, was in truth appallingly relaxed. It is not to be wondered at that in the prevalent atmosphere of the day there is found a general disinclination to accept Penance voluntarily, and a growth of the practice of deferring Baptism to mature years. It may be surmised that most of the cases of Penance at this time were imposed by authority by way of penalty for notorious offences. The disabilities following Penance had come to be a tradition of the Roman church, but how far these disabilities were accepted anywhere outside the immediate influence of the Roman bishop is matter for question. Thus in Spain, the country to which this letter was addressed, if we may judge from the letters of Pacian, there was no system of the sort in general acceptance. At least his appeals for the voluntary undertaking of penitence make no mention of such after consequences, but rather dwell upon the easiness of the yoke. Similarly it appears to be obvious from the investigations pursued above that alike at Antioch and at Constantinople there is no trace of any such penal severity.

Moral declension.

Penance avoided.

One interesting feature of the directions of Siricius is his reaffirmation of the position that Penance is only available once. The penitent who on restoration has refused to accept his disabilities may not do Penance again (*suffugium non habent penitendi*).<sup>1</sup> He is to be admitted among the faithful for the *Prayer*, but restrained from communion. He may, however, be communicated on the approach of death. The contrast of all this with the trend of usage at Antioch and Constantinople and with the temper of S. Chrysostom is here again very striking.

Penance available once only.

The fourteenth section of the letter of Siricius may be referred to. He rules that as clerks may not do penance, so laymen after penance may not become clerks.

Clerks may not do penance. Penitents not to be clerks.

S. Innocent I. was pope from A.D. 402 to A.D. 417. His letter to Exsuperius, bishop of Toulouse, shows an appreciation of the contrast between the comparative leniency of his own day in admitting capital offenders to restoration, and the greater rigour which had prevailed in a past age; and he attempts to find a reasonable explanation of the change.

S. Innocent I.

The question is asked what course ought to be observed with regard to those who, after surrendering themselves to the gratifications of incontinence for the whole term of life after Baptism, at last when in sight of death demand at once penance and reconciliation. Innocent replies as follows :—

Present leniency and former severity.

<sup>1</sup> *Cap. 5.*

“The former observance in these cases was more rigorous (*durior*): the later, compassion intervening, is more indulgent (*inclinatio*). For the former custom held that penance should be conceded, but communion denied. For, since in those times persecutions were frequent, communion was fitly denied, for fear lest the ready concession of communion should fail to recall from lapse those who were sure of reconciliation. Penance was conceded that all should not be denied: and the procedure of the time made remission a matter of great difficulty. But after that our Lord restored peace to His churches, terror being driven away, it was approved that communion should be given to those who were passing from this life, both on account of the mercy of God, as a food for the way (*viaticum*) for those setting forth, and also that we may not seem to follow the harshness and rigour of the heretic Novatian who refused pardon. Accordingly, let the last communion be accorded as well as the penance: and let men of this sort, even in their last moments, be delivered from the everlasting ruin, with the permission of our Saviour.”<sup>1</sup>

The various practice found in history not incompatible with the Lord's commission.

The grounds of the differences of treatment accorded by the Church to the penitent sinner at different times, in different places, and under different circumstances, must necessarily call for the thoughtful consideration of every earnest Christian student. The differences themselves are indisputable. Innocent already discerned the revolution in procedure which had taken place since those days at the close of the second century when the capital offences were all reserved for the judgment of God, and for them the Church only used her prerogative to retain. Not less striking to the modern student is the utter contrast between the Roman practice of the days of Siricius when Penance could only be admitted once in the whole term of life after Baptism, and the modern practice of the Latin communion, which requires each one of the faithful to resort to the tribunal of Penance at least once in each year, and encourages confessions of still greater frequency. The Catholic student will not readily believe that these differences, striking as they are, have found place in the Church otherwise than “with the permission of our Saviour.” He is prepared to believe that the commission of our Lord to forgive and to retain sins was a commission leaving much to the discretion of the Church of each age, and to understand that this discretion was variously exercised according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners. The explanation of S. Innocent that in times of persecution the Church could not afford to make lapse easy is a perfectly reasonable explanation. The action of the Church in remitting or retaining sins is a present action looking for the present ratification of the Lord, but it makes no claim to anticipate the final

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. vi. cap. 2.*



judgment of the Lord at the last great day, and however varying the terms of penance and of absolution, they foreclose the final doom of no one single soul. Meanwhile the present needs and opportunities of the Church have much to say in each succeeding age as to the terms by which she sees fit to condition the administration of her high prerogative. And if the sacramental empowerment to remit sins after Baptism has been committed to human instruments with a larger measure of discretion than finds place in the empowerment in Baptism itself, there may well be found a reason precisely here, that is to say, in the varying circumstances of the Christian community. After all, GOD leads His people save so far as He is thwarted by rebellious wills. The exercise of penitential discipline may in the ages vary *toto cælo*, and yet in all its varying exercise, where it has been faithfully pursued, it has expected and maybe it has found the "permission of our Saviour." In his letter to Decentius, bishop of Eugubium in Umbria (c. A.D. 416), Innocent gives some information as to the procedure in reconciling penitents in the city of Rome.

Procedure  
at Rome  
in recon-  
ciling  
penitents.

"Concerning penitents who are doing penance (*pœnitentiam gerunt*) whether for the graver or the lighter offences (*sive ex gravioribus commissis, sive ex levioribus*) the custom of the Roman church indicates that remission is to be made to them on the Thursday before Easter. Farther, in estimating the weight of offences it is the office of the priest (*sacerdotis*) to judge, so that he should give heed to the confession of the penitent, and to the weeping and tears of him who is correcting (his fault), and then (it is his office) to command him to be set loose, when he shall see his satisfaction suitable. But if any have incurred sickness, and his life be despaired of, remission is to be given before the season of Easter, lest he should depart from the world without communion."<sup>1</sup>

It will be noticed that the distinction is still maintained between the graver or capital sins, and the lighter. The graver sins are presumably the three capital sins of apostasy, impurity, and homicide.<sup>2</sup> The lighter sins are such other sins as called for penance and restoration; sins, that is to say, of a serious character, but not to be classed with the three capital offences. The sins known as venial in the moral theology of modern times, the offences into which the just man falls seven times a day, are not regarded by any ancient writer as proper matter for the exercise of formal Penance. But the sins which do call for formal Penance fall into two clearly marked divisions. The reader will recall Tertullian's distinction of *delicta leviora* and Cyprian's of *peccata minora* from the capital or mortal sins.

The graver  
and the  
lighter  
sins.

Whether the offences for which penance was in course were of the graver or of the lighter character formal absolution was

Absolution  
on the

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* xxv. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Or perhaps these with some additions, as in the lists of Tertullian.

Thursday  
before  
Easter.

ordinarily to be conveyed in a public function on the Thursday before Easter. This was the custom (*consuetudo*) of the Roman church.<sup>1</sup>

*Sacerdos*  
not now  
confined  
to bishops.

Innocent affirms that it is the function of the *sacerdos* to judge (*judicare*) of the gravity of offences. The expression is of interest as bearing on the familiar modern division of the confessor's office into the threefold functions of judge, physician and priest. Who is the *sacerdos*? In the time of S. Cyprian, a hundred and fifty years before, *sacerdos* had meant the bishop and the bishop only. In Innocent's time this is no longer the case. In this same letter to Decentius, in the following section, Innocent himself draws a clear distinction between the bishop (*episcopus*) and the *sacerdotes*, evidently here the priests of the second order, when he says that the holy oil of chrism which has been blessed by the bishop may be used for the sick not only by the priests, but by all Christians when necessity requires. We recall the statement of the *Liber Pontificalis* that Marcellus appointed twenty-five titles in Rome for Baptism, Penance, and the care of the tombs of the martyrs.

The priest  
is to hear  
the con-  
fession,

to judge of  
the peni-  
tence,

and of the  
satisfaction,  
and to  
order the  
discharge.

The bishop  
gives the  
formal  
absolution.

The priest whose function it is to judge, is to give his attention to the confession of the penitent (*attendat ad confessionem pœnitentis*), and also to the tokens of the sincerity of his repentance (*ad fletus atque lacrymas corrigentis*). Having before him the evidence (*a*) of the sin, and (*b*) of the repentance, it is still the priest who, when he considers the satisfaction adequate (*congruam satisfactionem*), is to order the discharge of the penitent. But, as has been seen in the case of Fabiola, it was the bishop who in the Roman church pronounced the solemn and public absolution by which this discharge was effected. For this solemn and public function the appointed day, as we here learn from S. Innocent, was the Thursday before Easter.

The priest  
reconciles  
the dying.

It appears, then, to be clear that at this time, although there was no formal Penance or confession to a priest in the case of such sins as would now be styled venial, the Penance practised for more serious sins whether of the graver or of the lighter kind involved confession to a priest, presumably the priest of the *title* to which the penitent belonged, and presumably also private in its character. Also, in the case of a moribund penitent who is to be reconciled without waiting for the public solemnity, the instructions of Innocent, which give no suggestion of summoning the bishop, may be taken to imply that the priest would effect the reconciliation himself.

Heretics  
received  
by im-  
position  
of hands

In a letter to Alexander, bishop of Antioch, S. Innocent makes a statement which bears upon the difficult subject of the use at Rome of the imposition of hands. He says that heretics are

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* xxv. 7.



received "by the imposition of hands after the pattern of Penance" "after the pattern of penance." (*sub imagine pœnitentiæ*).<sup>1</sup> This would seem to imply (1) that the imposition of hands was employed for the reconciliation or absolution of heretics, and (2) that such imposition of hands was taken from the procedure of Penance. May the inference be drawn that in the procedure of Penance the imposition of hands was employed for reconciliation or absolution? Not, it would seem, necessarily. It is possible that in ordinary Penance at Rome the imposition of hands was used for admission to Penance, or during its course, and that in the case of heretics this was allowed to carry also the reconciliation. The subject will be dealt with in the reviewing chapter.

Cœlestine I., who was bishop of Rome from A.D. 422 to A.D. 432, addressed a letter in July A.D. 428 to the bishops of the provinces of Vienne and Narbonne with regard to certain abuses prevalent in those provinces. One of these abuses had concern with the death-bed administration of Penance. S. Cœlestine I.

"It has come to our knowledge that Penance is denied to the dying, and that the desires of those are not acceded to, who at this time of their death seek that help may be rendered to their souls by such remedy. We are horrified, to be plain, that any should be found so greatly impious as to despair of the loving-kindness of God: as though He could not afford help to any who may have recourse to Him at whatsoever time, and free the man who is in peril under the burden of his sin from the weight of which he seeks to be relieved."<sup>2</sup> He condemns the withholding of Penance from the dying.

Cœlestine goes on to say that such severity adds death to the dying, and kills the soul as well as the body: and that the conversion of the sinner is to be estimated not by time but by sincerity (*mente*).

The subject of death-bed penitence, and the acute differences of judgment which arose in the fifth and sixth centuries with regard to it, southern Gaul being the storm centre, deserve the careful attention of the student. In the next section will be noticed the rigorism of Faustus of Reii, and the carefully elaborated judgment of S. Cæsarius of Arles, with its threefold distinction of death-bed penitents. The letter of Cœlestine I. shows that in A.D. 428 this serious controversy was already in course.

Death-bed penitence has a more considerable share in the history of Penance than has always been appreciated. It has not been uncommon for controversial writers to assume either that, in the centuries before the private system of penance became prevalent, the penance of the ancient system was largely used, or, on the other hand, that it was non-existent. What appears Death-bed penitence important for this history.

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* xxiv.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep.* 4.

to be more nearly the truth of the case is that in the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries, public penance in the lifetime was greatly disused, and indeed only employed in cases of great voluntary fervour, or of the exceptional action of authority. But all the time the resort to the offices of the Church at the hour of death appears to have been general. The penalties and disabilities of Penance during life were unhappily deterrent: but the absolving office of the Church was not questioned, and at the approach of death it was eagerly sought. Thus it came about that the Penance actually employed by large numbers of persons meant one confession at death without public circumstance, followed by the absolution, not of the bishop, but of a priest. And doubtless when in the eighth century the new practice of private penance in the lifetime, with absolution by a priest, came to be employed in parts of Western Christendom, it received the readier acceptance, because it was, in fact, identical with the sort of Penance with which alone the Christian community was ordinarily familiar, the Penance of the dying.

S. Leo  
Magnus.

S. Leo the Great, who was bishop of Rome from A.D. 440 till A.D. 461, supplies indications of the temper and practice of the Roman church a generation later than S. Innocent I.

Penance  
might  
either be  
(1) im-  
posed, or  
(2) volun-  
tary.

In a letter to the bishops of the province of Vienne, Leo deals with episcopal excommunication and the imposition of penance by episcopal authority. At all times in the history of the Church exclusion from communion with accompanying penance could be either (*a*) imposed by authority, or (*b*) accepted by voluntary submission. By the middle of the fifth century voluntary penance was everywhere becoming rare, and penance imposed by authority was tending to become restricted to notorious offenders condemned in a course of formal procedure. Thus in Africa S. Augustine in his sermon numbered 351, which may be ascribed to some time in the first quarter of the fifth century, says: "We cannot (*non possumus*) forbid any one from communion, except such as have voluntarily confessed, or have been charged and convicted by some judicial sentence, secular or ecclesiastical."

The undoubted result at this period was that a large proportion of serious offenders came under neither kind of penance. They neither of their own motion sought the relief of penance and absolution, nor was it sufficiently any one's business to bring home their offences to them by authoritative action.

Bishops of  
Vienne re-  
buked for  
hasty ex-  
communi-  
cations.

The bishops of the province of Vienne do not appear to have reached the stage of ordered action which the words of S. Augustine would imply. With them it would seem that it was a thing possible for a bishop to excommunicate in mere heat of temper for light offences or bare words, thus exposing souls for whom Christ died to privation of the grace of communion. Also due care had not been taken that penalty should not exceed offence,



or that the innocent should not be made to share the punishment of the guilty. We recognise a condition of things which prepares for the regulation of discipline by formal action in duly constituted courts. Leo writes in well-merited reproof.<sup>1</sup>

In a letter to Theodore, bishop of Forum Julii (Fréjus) an important passage occurs which it is best to give at length.

“The manifold mercy of God has so come to the rescue of human falls that not only by the grace of Baptism, but also by the medicine of Penance (*pœnitentiæ*) the hope of eternal life is renewed, so that those who had violated the gifts of regeneration, condemning themselves by their own judgment, attained to the remission of their offences: the safeguards of the divine goodness being so ordered that the indulgence of God cannot be obtained save by the supplications of the priests. For the Mediator of God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, delivered this power to the rulers (*præpositis*) of the Church, both that they should accord the performance of penance to those making confession, and also should admit these persons by the gate of reconciliation to the communion of the sacraments when they had been purged by healthy satisfaction. In this work assuredly the Saviour Himself intervenes without cessation, nor is He ever absent from these (functions) which He has committed to His ministers to fulfil, saying: Behold I am with you always even to the end of the world: so that if by our service aught is filled out with sound order and welcome result, we doubt not but that this was given by the Holy Spirit.”<sup>2</sup>

Priests  
necessary  
for pen-  
ance.

Christ  
partici-  
pates in  
this  
ministry.

In this important passage of S. Leo attention may be called to three points. (1) There are two channels by which rescue is conveyed to fallen man; of which the first is Baptism, the second the medicine of Penance. (2) For this second channel the priest is necessary; “the indulgence of God cannot be obtained save by the supplications of the priests.” Christ gave this power to the *præpositi* of the Church (*a*) that they should accord to those confessing the performance of penance (*actionem pœnitentiæ*); and (*b*) should reconcile them after satisfaction. (3) Christ Himself participates ever in this ministry so that its course and result are to be attributed to the Holy Spirit.

This last statement that the course and result of the ministry of reconciliation, a ministry in which Christ participates, are to be attributed to the Holy Spirit recalls the exposition of S. Cyril of Alexandria. S. Cyril says that the Holy Spirit “remitted and retained the sins according to His proper will, though the operation was effected by man.” S. Cyril died in A.D. 444; S. Leo became bishop of Rome in A.D. 440. S. Cyril is thus the earlier writer; and S. Leo may have had some knowledge of his teaching.

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep.* 108.

Contrast  
of the  
condition  
of those  
who die  
absolved  
with that  
of those  
who die  
unrecon-  
ciled.

Continuing, S. Leo makes a statement of much value in which he compares the condition of those who are absolved by the Church in this life with that of those less happy ones who pass away unreconciled. On this point he elucidates the mind of the Church of his day, which is indeed the mind of all the early centuries.

“But if any of those for whom we supplicate the Lord, overtaken by whatsoever obstacle, has missed the grant of present indulgence, and before he has attained to the appointed remedies has finished his temporal life by the incidence of mortality; that which he did not receive while yet remaining in the body, he will not be able to attain when divested of the flesh. Nor is it necessary that we should discuss the merits and deeds of those who have thus died, since our Lord GOD, whose judgment cannot be comprehended, has reserved for His own justice that which the priestly ministry was unable to fulfil; it being His will that His power should be held in awe, that this dread may be of service to all men, and that none should be without fear of that which happens to certain lukewarm and negligent persons. For it is in a high degree useful and necessary that the guilt of sinners be absolved by priestly supplication before the last day.

“Whence it behoves every Christian to hold a judgment of his conscience, lest he should defer his turning to GOD from day to day, and set himself the time of satisfaction at the close of his life; because it is only with risk that frail and ignorant humanity thus limits itself in this mortal life, reserving itself to the uncertain issue of a few hours; and while it is possible for a man by fuller satisfaction to win indulgence, chooses the straitness of that time, in which neither the confession of the penitent (*confessio pœnitentis*) nor the priestly reconciliation (*reconciliatio sacerdotalis*) is likely to find adequate opportunity. Yet, as I have said, help is to be rendered to the necessity even of such persons in such sort that the performance of penance (*actio pœnitentiæ*) and the grace of communion be not denied to them, if they demand this by signs given in sound mind, even when the use of the voice has been lost.”

The passage has been cited here at length that the spirit of it may be the better appreciated. There is a benefit of absolution which is to be had in this life through penance and the priestly reconciliation which is not to be had when once this life is ended. All such sinners as die unreconciled “the Lord GOD, whose judgment cannot be comprehended, has reserved for His own justice.” It is hardly stated by any early writer that this Divine justice must necessarily involve eternal damnation: but the expectation of the Divine justice is one greatly different from the easy anticipation of mercy which comes so readily to the modern Christian. The unreconciled are not only in an inferior position to the



reconciled in the space which will elapse before the final judgment; but there is reason for them to greatly dread that judgment, and to hold God's power in awe. For such is the "certain fearful looking for of judgment" of the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews. By comparison with their condition the advantage of present reconciliation in the Church after penance is obvious.

In a letter to Nicetas, bishop of Aquileia, Leo answers an inquiry as to the proper course to pursue with persons who through fear or error had permitted themselves to be baptized by heretics a second time.<sup>1</sup> Leo replies that such should not be received to communion "except by the remedy of penance, and the imposition of the bishop's hand." The bishop is to assign the duration of the penance as his judgment decides (*tuo constituyente iudicio*). In this judgment he will take account of circumstances, as the devotion of the penitents, the advanced age of any, or the necessities arising from impending risk or actual sickness. In cases where the sickness is grave the grace of communion may be accorded while the penance is still in course.

Penance for persons rebaptized by heretics.

The bishop to assign its duration.

In the same letter to Nicetas Leo rules that in the case of captives polluted by the reception of food offered to idols the compunction of the heart is to be weighed rather than the length of time.

Compunction important rather than length of time in cases of idolatrous pollution.

In another letter addressed to Rusticus, bishop of Narbonne, Leo replies *seriatim* to a number of questions which that prelate had addressed to him. To *Inq.* ii. he answers that it is not in accordance with ecclesiastical custom that priests and deacons should offer themselves for public penance, or receive the imposition of the hand which accompanied such penance. These should fulfil their satisfaction in retirement.<sup>2</sup>

Public penance not for priests and deacons.

Replying to *Inq.* vii. he deals with the case of those who, having accepted penance in sickness, were after recovery unwilling to perform it. Such persons were not to be left to themselves, but frequently exhorted.

Sick persons who on recovery withhold penance.

Among the inquiries of Rusticus had been one (*Inq.* ix.)

"concerning those who under the spur of exceeding sorrow ask that penance may be accorded them, and who, when the priest comes prepared to give what they sought, if it happen that their sorrow have somewhat quieted down, excuse themselves, and are unwilling to accept what is offered."

Persons who withdraw from penance after asking for it.

The case is interesting. It shows the unwillingness of some to accept Penance and all that Penance implied, unless when under the influence of deep emotion. It also shows that the procedure was for the offender to make application to the priest for formal admission among the penitents, and for the priest to come in person to effect this formal admission into a recognised status by some definite action at a point of time. This does not correspond to the ceremonial

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* 159.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep.* 167.

acknowledgment of penitents by bishop, clergy and people of which Jerome and Sozomen have left descriptions. Such public procedure probably followed the private admission as could be arranged.

Leo replies that the withdrawal of the person need not be actuated by contempt of the remedy, but perhaps by fear of worse offending: and that when Penance is sought again, it should not be denied.

The disabilities of penitents.

The disabilities which in the Roman church Penance was held to involve, as has been seen in the letter of Siricius, are also specified by Leo. While admitting the distinction between honest and dishonest gain he holds it better for a penitent to avoid all trafficking (*Inq.* xi.). The reason which he gives hardly seems to apply to a penitent more than to others: "because it is difficult to avoid the intervention of sin in the commerce of buyer and seller." We catch a glimpse of a world where all trading was more or less unscrupulous huckstering.

Again penitents do well to avoid litigation, "because it behoves him who asks pardon for unlawful deeds to abstain from many lawful ones" (*Inq.* x.). No penitent is to undertake military service, since the Apostle says, "No man that warreth for God (*militans Deo*) entangleth himself in worldly affairs" (*Inq.* xii.). As regards the copula of marriage Leo holds that a man who to avoid fornication has resumed cohabitation with his wife can only be charged with a venial offence; but at the same time recalls that nothing better suits a penitent than persevering chastity both of mind and body (*Inq.* xiii.).

The comments of Leo on the disabilities of penitents leave the impression that he feels himself bound to maintain them as part of the accepted discipline of the Roman church, but that he is at a loss to justify them.

✓ Case of Christians taken captive in childhood by pagans.

In the case of persons who had been baptized in infancy, and later had been taken captive by pagans, Leo decides that if they have merely eaten food offered to idols they may be purged by fasting and the imposition of the hand. But if they have worshipped idols, or have been defiled by acts of bloodshed or fornication, they should only be admitted to communion after public penance (*Inq.* xix.). It will be noticed that the three capital offences of former centuries are still the outstanding offences. They are now the three offences which render public penance indispensable.

S. Leo's condemnation of public confession.

It has been noticed in these pages that in the early centuries it is difficult to obtain any satisfying evidence that the public confession of sins by word of mouth ever at any time in any place formed part of the formal discipline of penance. One exception now occurs: and it is mentioned by S. Leo only for condemnation. In a letter (A.D. 459) addressed to all the bishops in Campania, Samnium, and Picenum, provinces which clustered



round the central Latium, he condemns two practices which had found place among them. Of these the first was the administration of Baptism outside the ordinary times of Easter and Pentecost: while the second is the practice of public confession, of which he has only recently heard, as being the practice of some.

“I also rule that that presumption in conflict with the apostolic rule, of which I have recently become aware as being committed by some in lawless usurpation, be by all means brought to an end. I mean that in the matter of the penance which is demanded of the faithful there should be no public recitation of the nature of particular sins, such profession being written in a statement (*libellus*). For it suffices that the accusation of consciences be indicated to the priests (*sacerdotibus*) alone in secret confession. For although that fulness of faith seem to be praiseworthy, which on account of the fear of God does not shrink from blushing before men, yet because the sins of all are not of such sort that they do not fear to publish those matters which call for penance, let so objectionable a custom be put away lest many be held off from the remedies of Penance, who either are ashamed, or who fear to have disclosed to their enemies deeds of theirs for which they may be brought to ruin under the provision of the laws. For that confession suffices, which is first offered to God and then also to the priest, who approaches as a suppliant for the sins of penitents. For if the conscience of him who confesses be not published in the ears of the people, then a larger number can be provoked to penitence.”<sup>1</sup>

This passage is of much importance. The astonishment and indignation of S. Leo at this to him entirely new departure; the description of the practice as a public recitation of particular sins previously written down in a *libellus*; the objections which might be entertained not only from a sense of shame, but in particular cases from liability to punishment under the penal laws; are all features of great interest.

Again the description of the normal practice, which Leo accounts to be sufficient, as “the accusation of conscience to the priests alone is secret confession,” or as “that confession which is first offered to God, and then also to the priest,” makes quite clear the character of the confessions which were heard at this time by the priests of the Roman *tithes*.

The history of Sozomen has already been referred to in connexion with the church of Constantinople. It was written in the middle of the fifth century, and may be taken as contemporary with the papacy of S. Leo (A.D. 440–461). Sozomen refers to the practice of public penance which had been discontinued at Constantinople sixty years before as being still in force in the West, and in particular at Rome.

Confession  
at Rome  
was private.

Description  
of public  
penance at  
Rome.

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* 168.

"It is also carefully maintained in the churches of the West, and especially in that of the Romans. There the place of those who are in penance is conspicuous: they stand with downcast eyes and with the seeming of mourners. When the Divine Liturgy is concluded, not partaking of Those Things which are lawful to the initiated, with wailing and lamentation they cast themselves prostrate on the ground. Also the whole multitude of the Church with loud crying are suffused in tears. After this the bishop first arises and raises the prostrate ones, and having prayed in such sort as is fitting on behalf of the sinners who are doing penance (μεταμελονμένων), he dismisses them. Meanwhile in private each spends so much time as the bishop has appointed him in voluntary self-affliction, or in fastings, or without ablutions, or in abstinence from meats, or in such other (modes of penance) as have been assigned to him. On the appointed day having discharged his penalty like some debt, he is absolved from his offence, and takes part in the assembly with the people. This procedure the bishops of the Romans preserve from old time even to our own day."<sup>1</sup>

This detailed description of the Roman procedure in the fifth century taken in connexion with the passages already cited from other sources makes it possible to construct the procedure of the Roman church with some precision.

Review of  
the Roman  
procedure  
of penance.

It would seem that from the time of the struggles of faction under Marcellus and Eusebius it had been the tradition of the Roman see to require serious penance for serious offences, and in particular for the offence of apostasy. In this case the offender appears only to have been admitted to communion on the approach of death. In other cases of offence the period of penance appears to have been for a determinate time. This time was marked (a) by certain solemn exhibitions before the Church which found place in the course of the celebration of the Liturgy, and (b) also by the exercise of such private acts of penance as had been appointed to the penitent. The period of penance was entered upon by a definite act of according Penance (*dare pœnitentiam*) on the part of the priest, and of accepting it (*accipere*) on the part of the penitent. This act might be private at least in sickness. When a sick person sought (*petebat*) Penance, the priest at least on some occasions visited him for the express purpose of according it (*daturus quod petebat*).<sup>2</sup>

There was never at any time so far as appears one priest penitentiary acting on behalf of the bishop for the whole Roman church: but, apparently from the time of Marcellus, there had been appointed twenty-five priests of *titles*, who dealt with cases of Penance as well as with candidates for Baptism, and with the sepulchres of the martyrs. It appears from S. Innocent that

<sup>1</sup> Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, VII. 16.

<sup>2</sup> S. Leo Magnus, *Ep.* 167.



confession was made to the priests, who were to give attention to such confessions, and to judge alike of the gravity of the offences, and of the reality of the penitence. It was, no doubt, the priest who assigned the penance, and it was his duty when he considered the satisfaction adequate to approve the discharge of the penitent. He did not, however, absolve the penitent except in cases of sickness. It was the bishop who in a public service of much solemnity held on the Thursday before Easter absolved all penitents whose discharge had thus been sanctioned. In this service may have found place the imposition of the bishop's hands as the outward expression of the reconciliation or absolution of the penitent:<sup>1</sup> but there is no mention of such imposition in the direct descriptions of the ceremony. Sozomen speaks of the duration of the private exercises of penance as indicated by the bishop, but this, in view of S. Innocent's instructions to the priest, may probably be taken to include the priest acting with due authority.

When Sozomen cites the Roman church as a leading example of the once general practice of appointing priests penitentiary he is not misleading his readers. Only at Rome there were not less than twenty-five priests empowered to act as penitentiaries in all the stages short of the formal reconciliation, and it was the bishop himself who conducted the final ceremony by which that formal reconciliation was effected.

As regards the period of penance it has been seen that at Rome this period was occupied by acts both of private and of public penance. This is interesting because at a later stage in the history of the Church a clear line of demarcation will be drawn between acts of public penance, then only to be demanded for public and notorious offences, and acts of private penance, which will then be held to be proper to private or secret sins. The public ceremony, alike in the case of Fabiola as described by S. Jerome and in the cases described by Sozomen, was of a dramatic and imposing character. The penitents, attired in the garb of affliction, made a solemn weeping and wailing and prostrated themselves upon the ground in abasement for their sins. Their act of penitence was met by a remarkable and affecting ceremony which, so far as appears, was peculiar to the Roman church. The bishop, with the clergy and all the faithful, advanced from the opposite end of the church to meet the penitents. They too, the bishop, clergy and faithful, assumed the rôle of penitents as though their proper due, weeping and wailing in loud lamentation (this is described alike by S. Jerome and by Sozomen). They too, as they came near to the penitents, prostrated themselves upon the ground. At this point all alike lay prostrate on the floor of the church, bishop, clergy and faithful laity, as well as the penitent offenders. It was the solemn outward expression of a

<sup>1</sup> S. Leo, *Ep.* 159.

humble and a contrite church. The bishop first himself rises, and then proceeds to raise the suppliant offenders from the earth. We may understand in this act a solemn recognition of the brotherhood of the suspended brethren, or a ceremonial foreshadowing of the absolution which was in sight, but it was not yet the actual absolution, which was reserved for the Thursday before Easter. There followed public prayers for the penitents, the bishop praying on their behalf "in such sort as is fitting."

At what point of the Liturgy in the Roman use the penitents received their dismissal is matter of some question. The dismissal might be expected at the end of the *missa catechumenorum*. Sozomen, however, says that the ceremonial prostration of the penitent finds place "when the Divine Liturgy is concluded, (the penitent) not partaking of Those Things which are lawful to the initiated." If he means that part of the Divine Liturgy to which penitents were admitted, a meaning which his Eastern reader might presuppose, the phrase may still admit of the dismissal of the penitents before the *Prayers*. But some modern scholars<sup>1</sup> have come to the conclusion that in Rome and generally throughout the West the penitents were permitted to remain during the whole of the Liturgy.

The private penitential exercises of the penitent might take various forms "as had been appointed him." Such were fasting, privation of the bath, abstinence from meats.

In due course, after the penance accomplished, came Maundy Thursday with the imposition of the bishop's hand for the formal conveyance of the reconciliation of the Church. The form of reconciliation in the *Gelasian Sacramentary* is here a valuable authority.

Ancient  
Order for  
the recon-  
ciliation  
of penitents  
in the  
*Gelasian*  
*Sacra-*  
*mentary*.

The service book known as the *Gelasian Sacramentary* contains an *Order* for the reconciliation of penitents which has been printed above without abbreviation. It is not an easy task to pronounce with certainty on the dates of the component parts of services of ancient origin which have been transcribed and modified in later times. Mr. H. A. Wilson of Magdalen College, Oxford, who in A.D. 1894 edited the *Gelasian Sacramentary*, expresses the opinion "that the Vatican manuscript, commonly called the *Gelasian Sacramentary*, is in the main derived from an early Roman Sacramentary, but incorporates some material drawn from Gallican sources, while the Sacramentary from which it was for the most part copied probably contained insertions and additions of a date later than the beginning of S. Gregory's pontificate. The Vatican manuscript itself certainly contains such Gregorian or post-Gregorian elements." The particular section *Orationes*

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Hugo Koch of Tübingen, *Die Büsserentlassung in der alten abend-ländischen Kirche*. (*Theologische Quartalschrift*, 1900, p. 481.) M. Boudinhon, *La Missa pœnitentium dans l'ancienne discipline d'Occident*. (*Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuses*, Année et Tome vii., 1902, p. 1.)



in *Quinta Feria* which has the *Order* for the reconciliation of penitents, is probably unaltered or hardly altered from early times.

The opening direction is that there is not to be singing, that is to say that the Introit at the commencement of the Liturgy is not to be sung; also that the bishop's salutation (*Dominus vobiscum*) is not to be given. Three introductory collects are furnished.<sup>1</sup> Next comes the heading, *The Order for those doing public penance* (*Ordo agentibus publicam pœnitentiam*); and the rubric :—

“The penitent comes forth from the place where he has done penance, and is presented in the bosom of the Church, his whole body prostrate on the ground. And the deacon makes request in these words.”

Presentation of the penitent.

The form of request to be recited by the deacon is of considerable length. It begins thus :—

“Venerable Pontiff, the accepted time is come, the day of the Divine propitiation and of human salvation, in which death has found its end, and eternal life its beginning, when in the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts a planting of fresh roots is so to be effected, that the care of that which is old may be purged. For although there is nothing of time in the riches of the goodness and kindness of GOD, yet at this time the remission of sins by indulgence is broader, and the assumption of those born again by grace is fuller. We grow by those to be newly born, we increase by those who have returned. The waters lave, the tears lave. On the one side there is joy in the reception of the called, on the other gladness in the absolution of the penitents.”

This analogy of the catechumen and the penitent, of the bestowal of the gift of spiritual life alike by Baptism and by Reconciliation, may be said to underlie the whole system of Penance in the Church of the early centuries. Outside was death, inside was life : penitent and catechumen alike had to pass from death to life. The steps of approach might well be assimilated : the actual reception of either, catechumen or penitent, might well come immediately before the Easter festival. The deacon proceeds :—

“Hence thy suppliant after falling into various forms of sin by neglect of the heavenly commands and by the transgression of approved morals, now humbled and prostrate, cries to GOD with outspoken voice, saying, ‘I have sinned, I have acted impiously, I have done iniquity, have mercy upon me, O Lord,’ receiving not with obstructive ears the saying of the Gospel, *Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted*. He has eaten the bread of affliction, as Scripture

<sup>1</sup> Duchesne regards them as alternative.

has it, has watered his couch with tears, has afflicted his heart with grief, and his body with fastings, to the end that he may receive for his soul the health which it had lost. Thus one only is the opportunity of Penance, which is at once of service to the individual, and comes to the succour of all in common. This suppliant therefore, O venerable pontiff, while he is encouraged to the performance of penance by so many examples, affirms and declares in the sight of the groaning (*ingemiscens*) Church, 'I acknowledge my transgression and my sin is ever before me. Turn away Thy face from my sins, O Lord, and blot out all my misdeeds. O give me the gladness of Thy health again, and strengthen me with Thy directing spirit.' As thus he supplicates, and with afflicted heart beseeches the mercy of God, restore (*redintegra*) in him, O apostolic pontiff, whatsoever is ruined by the cleaving of the devil, and by the protective (*patrocinantibus*) merits of thy prayers bring man near to God by the grace of the Divine reconciliation so that he who once displeased God in his perversities may rejoice that now he pleases the Lord in the land of the living, the author of his death being overcome."

All this time the penitent lies prostrate on the ground, the church all about him (he is *in gremio*) groaning in sympathy. The "apostolic pontiff" is called upon to *restore* him. The means of his restoration are indicated as the *protective merits* of the pontiff's prayers. So praying the pontiff will bring the man very near to God *by the grace of the Divine reconciliation*. Very interesting is the sentence *Unicum itaque est pœnitentiæ suffragium*, one only is the opportunity or sentence of Penance; or should it rather be *suffugium*, the refuge or remedy of Penance? <sup>1</sup> At any rate Penance may not be repeated, an assertion which goes to prove the antiquity of this *Order*. A rubric follows:—

"After this he is admonished by the bishop or by some other priest, that what by penance he has washed away, he do not call back by a repetition of offence. Afterwards the priest says these prayers over him."

The recon-  
ciliatory  
prayers.

Three prayers follow, after which four more prayers "for the reconciliation of the penitent" (*ad reconciliandum pœnitentem*). The prayers so headed must be understood to embody the verbal absolution. The last of them is as follows:—

"Holy Lord, Almighty Father, Eternal God, look upon this Thy servant, who has been overwhelmed by the hostile storms of the world, and now in tearful lamentation acknowledges his transgressions, in such sort that Thou wilt mercifully accept his prayers and groans, and recall him from the darkness to the light, and accord to the confessing a remedy,

<sup>1</sup> *Suffugium* was the word used by S. Siricius. He says of those who had fallen after penance, *suffugium non habent penitendi*.



to the penitent salvation, and to the wounded the succour of soundness. Nor let the enemy have power in his soul any more, but freely admitting his confession, do Thou restore him purged to Thy Church, and replace him at Thine altar, so that admitted to the sacrament of reconciliation he may be found worthy to give thanks together with us to Thy holy Name. Through . . .”

In these words did the Roman bishop give significant verbal expression to the accordance of the grace of reconciliation, and with these words the *Order* in the Gelasian Sacramentary concludes. The phrase *sacrament of reconciliation* employed in the prayer appears to refer to the Holy Eucharist.

It should be noted that in the Gelasian *Order* no mention is made of any laying on of hands by the bishop in connexion with this public solemnity of reconciliation. Heretics and schismatics, as has been seen, were reconciled by a laying on of hands, probably in a distinct function. There is no direct evidence that the laying on of hands was employed in the great annual solemnity for ordinary penitents.

No mention  
of laying  
on of  
hands.

That solemnity was at Rome the final act of the great drama of Penance. In the Roman church, however, the penitent had not left his past behind him because the bishop had absolved him. He was now again numbered among the faithful, and found in his place at the altar of the Lord. But alike from S. Siricius and from S. Leo we learn the disabilities which were yet to dog his footsteps and to hamper his action to the grave. Not for him the career of military service. Not for him the relaxation of the public games. Not for him even the upright pursuit of the avocations of commerce. The honourable estate of matrimony might not be his: or if he ventured to marry, or, being married, to resume his married life, the estate for him would never be counted honourable. Here is a development which to the modern student is not a little repellent: and it is not unpleasant to record that outside the immediate influence of the Roman see these disabilities leave no great mark. But within the sphere of that influence they doubtless had much to say to the general relaxation of discipline which now set in. They were too hard for human nature.

Disabilities  
of the after  
life.

Finally it must not be lost sight of that penance was suffered once only in the whole term of life. It will be seen that the same restriction, though now abandoned in the East, was at this time severely maintained not only at Rome, but elsewhere in the West, as at Milan, and in Africa. The fact is of high importance in view of the later developments of penitential practice.

Penance  
suffered  
once only.

The church of Milan under its great bishop S. Ambrose may next invite attention. In the days of S. Ambrose Milan was no mere provincial city. It then occupied a position relatively more important than has fallen to it at any other time before or since.

Milan.  
Its im-  
portance  
in the time  
of S.  
Ambrose.

It was the residence of the imperial court, and the actual capital of the empire of the West. And, as is usually the case, the church of Milan experienced some reflexion of this capital character. Her bishop S. Ambrose, conspicuous already by high personal qualities, became as bishop of Milan, whether in favour or disgrace, the foremost and most influential prelate of his day.

S. Ambrose. The history of S. Ambrose is well known. He was born about A.D. 340. At the time of his birth his father held the high office of prefect of the Gauls. Ambrose was trained for the law, and after having practised as an advocate, was made "consular" of Liguria and Æmilia, holding his court in the city of Milan. There he became known to the people as an able and upright magistrate. He was a Christian by profession, but after the unhappy fashion of the day had deferred his baptism to an indefinite future. On the death of Auxentius the bishop of Milan, who was an Arian, it seemed likely that there might be a breach of the peace between the Catholic and Arian parties, and Ambrose made his way to the church as civil magistrate with a view to preserve order at the impending election of a new bishop. It is related that a voice, apparently the voice of a child, called out "Ambrose for bishop," and that the whole assembly, Catholics and Arians alike, took up the cry, and hailed Ambrose bishop by acclaim.

His various protests, and his flight, all proved of no avail. He was baptized, and after rapidly passing through the intermediate stages, was on the eighth day consecrated bishop of Milan.

Never was a popular freak more thoroughly justified. A great administrator, an experienced magistrate, Ambrose as a bishop became at once a marked leader of men. His theology and his clerical duties he had doubtless to learn as he went. Some weaknesses were apparent enough to the men of his own day. Jerome made it his carping business to lay as bare as he might the extent to which Ambrose was indebted in his writings to the fine lead of Origen. But the greatness of Ambrose arose precisely in the two spheres in which his professional training had supplied him with high qualifications; that is to say, in the spheres of administration, and of magisterial discrimination. As an administrator, whether he is dealing with other bishops, with his clergy and people, with the imperial house, with hostile commanders, or with heretical opposition, he is ever capable, forceful, controlling. Again, his legal training had given him the keen insight into essential distinctions which characterised the Roman lawyer, and it is here that he will be found of service as regards the difficult questions involved in the subject of Penance. Ambrose in some respects readily recalls Cyprian to the mind of the historical student.

His qualities.

Like other bishops of his day Ambrose found a Novatianist church at work by the side of the Catholic community which acknowledged his own authority. The Novatianists were the



“orthodox dissenters” of the day. A continual harass to the Catholics, they were yet of indisputable faith and earnestness. The great dividing question was that of penitence, and accordingly at some point in his busy ministry Ambrose found time to write a treatise in two books *On Penitence* (*De Pœnitentia*), in which he attacks the Novatianist position. In this treatise he will be found to assert three principles of great importance in the theology of Penance. They are these :—

The *De Pœnitentia*.

Ambrosian principles.

- (a) If the Church has no power of loosing, then she has no power of binding.
- (b) God has conceded to His priests the liberty of remitting all sins without exception.
- (c) The remission of sins by Penance is precisely analogous to the human ministration in Baptism, or in the laying hands upon the sick.

In a later treatise, the *De Spiritu Sancto*, he lays down another important principle :—

- (d) Only God forgives sin : man exercises the ministry of God’s forgiveness.

The teaching of S. Ambrose may be considered as it falls under the heads of these four principles.

- (a) *If the Church has no power of loosing, then she has no power of binding.*

(a) If no loosing then no binding.

Here Ambrose at once seizes on what was perhaps the weakest point of the Novatianist contention. The Novatianist church claimed to bind the capital offender by a bond which could never be loosed this side the grave : and in the same breath asserted that the Church had no power to loose the sinner whom such sins oppressed. Ambrose regards this as an obvious inconsistency.

“The Lord willed that the right of loosing and the right of binding should be equal, Who permitted each under a like condition : therefore who has not the right of loosing has not either that of binding.”<sup>1</sup>

This is an argument which in the time of S. Ambrose was clearly of much force. In modern days the power of binding is but little exercised as compared with the power of loosing. In the early centuries the situation was precisely the reverse. The binding power was exercised with an extraordinary severity which was only relaxed point by point : the loosing power was regarded with a great timidity as possibly trenching on the Divine reserves. No such reserves were feared in the case of candidates for Baptism. There God’s mercy was by all acknowledged as conveying in the sacrament the remission of all previous offences howsoever heinous.

<sup>1</sup> *De Pœnitentia*, I. ii. (7).

In the presence of the capital sins of the baptized, the Church herself, as has been seen above, had in the second century tended to stand aside, leaving the offenders to the mercy of the Lord in the great day. And it was this attitude which the Novatianist sect now existed to conserve. The Catholic Church, however, had in the days of Callistus admitted the adulterer to Penance, and had after the Decian persecution also admitted the apostate to Penance. In the days of S. Ambrose the Church treated no sin as hopelessly outside her power of remission. S. Ambrose does not treat of this historical development, which, in all probability, he very imperfectly realised. He is concerned with a present controversy between the Church as he knows it, and Novatianism as he knows it. Which of these is in the right? S. Ambrose claims that the power of loosing was conveyed in the same commission as the power of binding; that each of these powers must be held to have the same scope and force; and that if one of them is rejected, the other must be rejected too.

(b) All sins  
remissible.

(b) *God has conceded to his priests the liberty of remitting all sins without exception.*

This is the actual claim of the Catholic Church in the days of S. Ambrose. The position had in fact been reached in the time following the Decian persecution, and had found expression in the thirteenth canon of the Nicene council, which laid down that all penitent sinners should be admissible to communion before death. The claim had never been more uncompromisingly stated than it is now stated by Ambrose. God "has conceded the liberty of remitting (*relaxandi*) to his priests (*sacerdotibus suis*)<sup>1</sup> without any exception (*sine ulla exceptione*)."

It will be noticed that the Divine authority conveyed is spoken of as "conceded to the priests (*sacerdotibus*)."

What had Ambrose in mind when he used the word *sacerdotibus*? At this time the word was no longer confined to bishops in the Christian usage. Also the Roman establishment of priests penitentiary who heard confessions, admitted to penance, assigned penalties, and indicated the time of discharge, could scarcely be unknown to S. Ambrose. Yet even in Rome, as has been seen, it was the bishop who formally absolved; and this absolution by the bishop may be expected as the rule in other sees of the Italian peninsula. It may well be that S. Ambrose had most in mind the bishops of the Church when thus he wrote.

(c) Penance  
analogous  
to Baptism,  
or the lay-  
ing hands  
upon the  
sick.

(c) *The remission of sins by Penance is precisely analogous to the human ministration in Baptism, or in the laying hands upon the sick.*

"Why then do you lay hands, and believe in the effect of your benediction, if it prove that the sick person has recovered? Why do you presume that any can be cleansed

<sup>1</sup> I. iii. (10).



by you from the filth of the devil? Why do you baptize, if it is not right that sins should be remitted by man? In Baptism equally there is the remission of all sins: what difference is there whether the priests claim this authority given to them by Penance, or by the Laver? It is the same mystery in each.”<sup>1</sup>

Ambrose thus claims that the human ministration in Penance is precisely analogous to the human ministration in Baptism or in the (? Unction and) benediction of the sick. Here again is the clear mind of the Roman lawyer. The source of remission is beyond all question Divine. The instrument is human in each case alike. The sacramental process is in each case a mystery: but “it is the same mystery in each.”

From the standpoint of modern theologies this clear analogy might be more insisted on. If indeed sacraments are not admitted to be effectual means of grace, then neither Baptism nor Penance will be counted more than forms. But if Baptism is recognised as conveying an inward and spiritual grace in connexion with the outward and visible sign; then why not Penance? The human minister in Baptism is not less human than is the human minister in Penance. In Baptism his discretion does not commonly go farther than to form a judgment as to whether the person to be baptized has the dispositions which will enable him to receive the Divine grace. In Penance he may assign terms of penalty and conditions of restoration as well as form a judgment as to the dispositions of the penitent. But in each case alike he is the mere instrument applying to the souls of fallen men the healing grace of the Divine Redeemer.

This principle, that the priest is but the human instrument of the Divine authority, may be stated separately as one of the great Ambrosian principles.

(d) *Only GOD forgives sins: man exercises the ministry of GOD'S forgiveness.*

(d) GOD forgives: man ministers forgiveness.

In the treatise *De Spiritu Sancto* S. Ambrose writes:—

“Also none forgives (*condonat*) sins but GOD only.”<sup>2</sup>

And as regards the human ministration:—

“But men employ their ministry for the remission of sins: they do not exert the right of any power. For neither do they remit sins in their own name, but in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. They ask (*rogant*): the Godhead grants. It is a human obedience (*obsequium*): but it is the munificence of supernal power.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I. viii. (36).

<sup>2</sup> *De Spiritu Sancto*, III. xviii. (133).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* (137).

The form  
of abso-  
lution  
employed.

The reference in this passage to the form of remission will be noted. It is of interest in the history of the forms of absolution, which have sometimes been precatory, sometimes declaratory. At Milan in the time of S. Ambrose it appears that the priests supplicate or ask (*rogant*): but also that they remit sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

S. Ambrose  
as a peni-  
tentiary.

Thus in the limited writings upon Penance which S. Ambrose has bequeathed to the Church may be found at least four great leading principles of the theology of Penance. It is a pleasing task to recall the personal ministry of the great bishop to sinful souls. History may more concern itself with the defender of the Catholics against the Arians; with his relations to the court, sometimes in resistance to the imperial house, sometimes as its ambassador; with his commanding figure in the pulpit of the cathedral at Milan, which so greatly impressed the young African rhetorician Augustine: but has S. Ambrose any better claim to the reverence of Christians than the picture thus drawn of him as a penitentiary by Paulinus of Milan, who had been his *notarius* or secretary?

“He was one who rejoiced with those who did rejoice, and wept with those who wept. For as often as any to obtain Penance (*ob percipiendam pœnitentiam*) confessed to him his lapses, he wept in such sort that he compelled him (the sinner) to weep too: for he seemed even to himself to lie prostrate with the prostrate. But the circumstances of the offences (*causas criminum*) which they confessed to him he never divulged to any but to the Lord alone, with Whom he made intercession: leaving a good example to priests after him, that they should rather be intercessors with God, than accusers to man.”<sup>1</sup>

Some further points in the writings of S. Ambrose may now be mentioned.

The lapsed  
who accept  
martyr-  
dom restore  
themselves.

It has been seen that in the days of the Decian persecution, and again in the persecution under Diocletian, the sense of the Christian community had been that the lapsed who afterwards accepted martyrdom must be held to have restored themselves. S. Ambrose expresses the same view without hesitation.

“We understand that very many framed themselves anew after their lapses, and suffered for the name of God. Can we deny to them association with the martyrs, when the Lord Jesus Christ has not denied it to them? Do we then dare to say that life has not been restored to these, to whom Christ has restored the crown?”<sup>2</sup>

Only one  
Penance  
after  
Baptism.

S. Ambrose, like the Roman church, knows of one only Penance after Baptism. It should be noted that on this important point, so far removed from modern practice, Rome, Milan, and Africa

<sup>1</sup> *Vita S. Ambrosii*, 39.

<sup>2</sup> *De Pœnitentia*, I. xi. (49).



in the second half of the fourth century stand together; while Antioch and Constantinople have thrown such restrictions to the winds. S. Ambrose expresses himself as follows :—

“They are deservedly reprovèd who hold that Penance may be repeated on several occasions. For if they did their Penance aright, they would not hold that it could be repeated afterwards : because, as there is one Baptism, so there is one Penance. This is, however, the Penance of public observance : for it behoves us to repent of our daily sins, but this penitence is of the lighter, the other of the graver sins.”<sup>1</sup>

It will be noted that this Church Penance, the Penance which may not be repeated, is a “penance of public observance,” and that it is concerned only with the graver, and not with the lighter sins.

In the judgment of S. Ambrose Penance is only rightly Penance when the penitent shows his affliction by the whole tenor of his life. The world is to be renounced; sleep to be curtailed; groans, sighs and prayers to mark the passing hours. Would any hold that life to be a life of penance in which was found ambition for office, the enjoyment of wine, the very use of marriage? Yet he notes that the ordinary penitent of his day was of another mind. “More readily have I found those who have preserved their innocence than those who have done Penance fitly (*congrue egerint pœnitentiam*).”<sup>2</sup>

The proper conduct of penitents.

An interesting passage in one of the letters of S. Ambrose shows that at Milan the day appointed for the solemn reconciliation of penitents was not as at Rome the Thursday before Easter, but Good Friday. S. Ambrose says that the day “on which Penance is loosened (*relaxatur*) in the Church” is the day “on which the Lord gave Himself up for us.”<sup>3</sup>

At Milan reconciliation on Good Friday.

It is difficult to follow the varying teaching and practice of the Novatianist body in the matter of the performance of Penance. From the first they had refused to admit the lapsed to reconciliation in this life. They had referred from the first, as Ambrose says they still referred, to the statement in the Epistle to the Hebrews : *It is impossible . . . if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.*<sup>4</sup> But Novatian had distinctly encouraged the penance of lapsed persons, it being understood that they might thus prepare themselves for the judgment of the Lord to whom their cases were reserved. As time went on the performance of public Penance which would lead to no absolution in this life appears, naturally enough, to have become neglected : and S. Pacian of Barcelona in his letters to Sympronianus will be found distinctly asserting that Penance was not practised among the Novatianists. Nor in the fifth century was it practised by

Novatianist practice as regards penance.

<sup>1</sup> *De Pœnitentia*, II. x. (95).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, (96).

<sup>3</sup> *Ep.* 20.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. vi. 4–6. *De Pœnitentia*, II. ii. (6).

them in the East. Socrates, whose knowledge of the Novatianists appears to have been intimate, states that in his time, some fifty years after the abolition of the priest penitentiary by Nectarius, neither the Catholics nor the Novatianists practised Penance, but that the Christian sects other than the Novatianists retained the practice. He adds of the Novatianists: "the latter indeed would never admit of its establishment."<sup>1</sup> It has, however, been seen above that Penance was practised in the beginnings of Novatianism. The reply of Acesius to Constantine shows it as practised as late as the Nicene period. The statement now made by S. Ambrose regarding the Novatianist practice at Milan in his time is interesting. "They say that, the graver (*gravioribus*) sins excepted, they accord pardon to the lighter (*levioribus*)."<sup>2</sup> Ambrose continues:—

"But not thus Novatian, the author of your error, who held that Penance should be given to none; in the view, no doubt, that what he could not loose, he would not bind; lest that for his binding it should be expected of him to loose."<sup>2</sup>

The statement about Novatian is unhistorical, and not in accordance with the fact. But the impression conveyed by the words quoted, as by the whole passage, is that in the time of S. Ambrose the Novatianists of Milan accorded absolution after penance in the cases of sins other than capital.

Theo-  
dosius.

The story of the excommunication of the emperor Theodosius by S. Ambrose is well known. Theodosius had in an access of fury punished the city of Thessalonica for a disturbance by directing a massacre in which seven thousand persons were said to have been put to death without the forms of law (A.D. 390). When the emperor returned to Milan, and was about to visit the church, Ambrose went out to meet him, and forbade him to enter the building.

The behaviour and the convictions of Theodosius on this occasion are alike instructive. He submitted to the rebuke of Ambrose and returned to the palace. When eight months later the Church was celebrating Christmas, "the emperor shut himself up in his palace, and shed floods of tears."<sup>3</sup> Rufinus, the controller of the palace, asked the cause. The emperor replied:—

"I weep and sigh when I reflect on the calamity in which I am involved. The church of GOD is open to servants and to mendicants, and they can freely enter and pray to the Lord. But to me the church is closed, and so are the doors of heaven. I bear in mind the utterance of the Lord, which says expressly, *Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.*"

<sup>1</sup> Socrates, *Hist. Ecc.*, V. 20.

<sup>2</sup> *De Pœnitentia*, I. iii. (10).

<sup>3</sup> Theodoret, *Hist. Ecc.*, V. 17.



Thus at the close of the fourth century the most highly placed layman of the Christian Church accepted the exercise of the binding office of the bishop, and held that it was ratified in heaven.

believes that his excommunication is ratified in heaven.

### 6. *Africa.*

Attention may now be turned to the churches of Africa. The African province of which in earlier ages first Tertullian, and after him Cyprian, had been the representative names for the rest of Christendom, is at the close of the fourth century again illustrious by the illuminating teaching of the great S. Augustine, bishop of Hippo. His writings, if not extensively concerned with the subject of Penance, have still much valuable evidence as to the practice of his day. A further important source of information is to be found in the collections of African canons which have come down to us.

Authorities. S. Augustine and the African canons.

The century and a half which have elapsed since the martyrdom of S. Cyprian have in Africa, as elsewhere, greatly modified the administration of Penance. The once prevalent clamour that the martyrs and confessors should be allowed a decisive voice in the reconciliation of the lapsed has long ceased. It is but one of many memories of a past which can never return. The reconciliation of all capital offenders in this life after due penance accomplished has since the Nicene council been nowhere resisted in the Catholic Church: but the Novatianist sect in Africa as elsewhere stand for the old rigorist contentions, and refuse to reconcile the offender.

Modifications since S. Cyprian.

In the Catholic Church Penance is still practised, and still has its procedure; but the advancing years have not been without their tendency to laxer courses. Many who have committed grave sins approach the sacrament of the altar. S. Augustine warns his hearers that none are on this account to despise "the counsel of this health-bearing Penance."<sup>1</sup> The old difficulty that Christians would not inform of the sins of others which were known to them is reviewed by Augustine.<sup>2</sup> He has no such vindictive condemnation for them as had S. Basil; but dispassionately reviews the reasons of their reticence. Some are not sorry to shelter themselves by bad examples: while good men may know what they are not prepared to prove. It is now recognised that no one can be excluded from communion except (a) on his own confession, or (b) on his conviction by a civil or ecclesiastical sentence.

Penance practised, yet sinners communicate without Penance.

Christians do not inform of the sins of others.

None excluded from communion except (a) on confession or (b) conviction. Clergy not to desert their flocks in a Vandal invasion. They are needed to baptize and reconcile

Still, in Africa there is no such disuse of Penance as appears to have come about at Antioch and at Constantinople. The clergy are warned not to desert their flocks when invasion is imminent; for in times of danger the concourse of those who seek Baptism or Reconciliation is great. The letter in which this warning occurs is of great interest. Honoratus, bishop of Thiava in

<sup>1</sup> *Sermo* 351.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Africa had consulted Augustine as to whether the clergy should remain at their posts when the Vandals invaded a city. He had written :—

“ If we are to remain in the churches, I do not see of what service we shall be to ourselves or to the people, save that before our eyes men will be slain, women ravished, churches burned, while we ourselves will be subjected to torture, when they demand of us what we do not possess.” <sup>1</sup>

The picture which Augustine draws of the Christian population under the stress of such an invasion is not a little striking.

“ When the extremity of these dangers is immediately imminent, and there is no longer the possibility of escape, how great a concourse of either sex and of every age is wont to be made in the church; some demanding Baptism, some Reconciliation, some the performance of Penance itself; all seeking consolation, and the solemnisation and administration of the sacraments.” <sup>2</sup>

Those who sought Baptism at such times would obviously be for the most part members of what may be called the permanent catechumenate, of whom there were in this age large numbers; persons who, as had been the case with Augustine's own father Patricius, were Christians by adhesion rather than by life, and who in easy times were content, while being counted as adherents, to remain outside the Church. Those who sought Reconciliation were presumably those who having been baptized had fallen into sin, and had not troubled to seek Penance till danger threatened. The Penance and Reconciliation of these persons, no less than the Baptism of the unbaptized, required the presence of the clergy, and would largely occupy them. If the clergy were not in attendance, what would result? Persons would die unbaptized or unreconciled, and how great calamity this would involve. Augustine's word is *exitium*. What exactly does he mean by it? He goes so far as to expect that the relatives of these persons who are themselves among the faithful will not in the eternal rest find in their fellowship those who have thus passed unreconciled. The state of such is at any rate a condition of privation and ruin, which can only be regarded with horror.

The *exitium* of those who die unreconciled.

“ Where, if ministers are lacking, how great an *exitium* follows those who pass forth from this life either unregenerate or bound ! How great is the grief of their faithful relatives, who will not have their company in the repose of the eternal life ! How great the groaning of all, and how great the ill-speaking of some regarding the absence of their ministers and servants. See what the fear of temporal ills effects, and how great an access of everlasting ills accrues from it. But if the ministers

<sup>1</sup> S. Augustine, *Ep.* 228.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



are present, help is afforded to all, according to the power which the Lord supplies to these (his ministers): some are baptized, some are reconciled, none are defrauded of the communion of the body of the Lord, all are consoled, are edified, are exhorted. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

It has been noticed above that in the early centuries the denial of reconciliation to capital offenders was not understood to foreclose the judgment of the great day. The passage of S. Augustine now quoted does seem to expect or anticipate a lasting severance from the fellowship of the elect of those unreconciled persons who had not sought reconciliation till it was too late. Some light is thrown on S. Augustine's attitude in this matter by his statement to be quoted shortly as to the future of those who defer penitence till death is imminent.

Who were the ministers of the many reconciliations which would thus be sought on the approach of invasion? In this letter S. Augustine uses the term *ministers* (*ministri*) with its related words *ministry* (*ministerium*) and *to minister* (*ministrare*) no less than thirty times. The term is a general term. It presumably does not here refer to any order below the priesthood. Does it apply to bishops only, or to bishops and priests? There is no use of the word *presbyter* or of the word *sacerdos*. In one place, speaking of the common danger of bishops, clerks, and layfolk (*episcoporum, clericorum et laicorum*), he distinguishes between bishops and clerks. In another place he speaks of clerks as being necessary to those about to lose their lives (*cui sunt clerici necessarii*), and again that it is the duty of clerks to remain (*clericos remansuros*), for that by them a necessary ministration may be afforded to such persons. The letter may therefore be said to convey the impression that not the bishops only, but that other clerks also, who would presumably be priests, reconciled penitents in these times of grave emergency.

Ministers  
of recon-  
ciliation  
not bishops  
only.

From African canons to be presently cited it is clear that the ordinary minister of reconciliation in Africa as at Rome was at this time the bishop. Also it is known that the African churches had a more than ordinary number of bishops, and that not only the great centres of population were episcopal sees, but that every small city or important village had its bishop no less. In the case of such small communities it would be to the bishop that all requests for reconciliation would naturally come. The canons, however, provide that priests may reconcile when death is imminent, and it may be presumed that an emergency such as a siege by the Vandals would be taken as coming under this provision.

Bishop the  
ordinary  
minister  
of recon-  
ciliation.

In a letter to a lady named Seleuciana, who had addressed Augustine as to difficulties which a Novatianist had raised on the subject of Penance, a statement occurs which is of interest as

Public  
penitents  
were grave  
offenders.

<sup>1</sup> S. Augustine, *Ep.* 228.

indicating the grade of offence which was regarded as rendering the offenders proper subjects for public penance alike in Africa, and "in all churches" at that time. The expression may be understood as indicating all churches of the West.

"Persons do Penance (*agunt pœnitentiam*) if after Baptism they have so sinned that they deserve first to be excluded from communion and later reconciled: as is the case with those in all churches who are properly styled penitents."<sup>1</sup>

Similarly in Sermon 352, after enumerating three sorts of penitence, first that proper to persons approaching Baptism, next the daily penitence for minor faults, and lastly the penitence for grave sins after Baptism, he says of this last:—

"It is a graver and more mournful penitence, and those who are concerned in it are the persons properly styled *penitents* in the Church. Such are withdrawn from participation in the Sacrament of the Altar, lest that by receiving unworthily, they should eat and drink condemnation to themselves. This accordingly is a mournful penitence. It is some grave wound: perhaps adultery has been committed, perhaps homicide, perhaps some deed of sacrilege; but a grave affair, a serious wound, deadly and death-bearing. But the Physician is All-powerful."

Beyond  
this no  
exact  
knowledge  
of offence.

Thus in S. Augustine's day any person seen performing public penance might be assumed to have offended in some very serious or deadly sin: and the recurring *perhaps* (*forte*) may possibly be taken to mean that while the onlookers could conclude the gravity of the offence, they had no means of attaining further precision.

The same conclusions are indicated by a passage in the *De Symbolo*, which is an address to catechumens. He exhorts his hearers after their Baptism to be careful to retain their baptismal innocence. Venial offences, indeed, may be met by prayer.

"But commit not those offences, for which it is necessary that ye be severed from the Body of Christ; that be far from you. For they whom ye see doing penance have committed crimes or adulteries or other deeds of enormity: and it is for this that they do penance. For if their offences had been light the daily prayer would have sufficed to remove them."<sup>2</sup>

From this passage it appears that the catechumens could see those who were doing penance (*quos videtis agere pœnitentiam*); that they might infer that the offences of these penitents were of the gravest, for that only such grave offenders were subjected to public penance; but that they had no such particular knowledge of the offence of any penitent as would have been available if the system had included any public confession in detail.

<sup>1</sup> *Ep.* 265.

<sup>2</sup> *De Symbolo ad catechumenos*, 15.



In the same address S. Augustine goes on to notice that in the Church sins are remitted in three ways: (1) in Baptism, (2) in prayer, and (3) "in the greater lowliness of Penance."

Sins re-  
mitted  
(1) in  
Baptism,  
(2) in  
prayer,  
(3) in  
Penance.  
Doubts as  
to death-  
bed  
penitents.

In Sermon 393, after stating that a sinner after Baptism who has done Penance with all his heart, and has lived suitably after his Penance, assuredly attains to the kingdom of God, Augustine proceeds to express a doubt as to the future state of the man who only seeks Penance when death is hard upon him.

"Do I say, 'he will be condemned'? I do not say so. But neither do I say, 'he will be released.' 'What then do you say to me?' I do not know; I neither presume nor promise; I do not know. Do you wish to free yourself from doubt? Do you wish to escape uncertainty? Do penance while you are in health."

This interesting statement as to death-bed reconciliations will voice the mind of the clergy of all ages. There is the expression of penitence; there is the reconciliation of the Church; but God only knows whether the disposition was in God's sight adequate to admit remission.

In the *De Diversis Quæstionibus*, lxxxiii. (c. A.D. 388) S. Augustine has a chapter *On the difference of sins*. A probable judgment may be formed as to whether (1) sins are of such a character that the offenders are not to be forced to mournful and grievous penance although they confess; or whether (2) no salvation is to be hoped for unless the offender shall have offered to God through Penance the sacrifice of a contrite spirit.

Some sins  
need  
Penance,  
others not.

In the *De Fide et Operibus* (c. A.D. 399) he repeats the ancient teaching about the three capital sins.

"They who consider that other offences can be readily compensated by almsgiving, yet do not doubt that there are three which are deadly, and to be punished by excommunications till they are cured by the more lowly Penance, that is to say, unchastity, idolatry, and homicide."<sup>1</sup>

The three  
capital sins.

It appears from this passage that some at least were of opinion that no sins except these three needed to be subjected to Penance. S. Pacian of Barcelona had, in fact, recently so taught in his *Exhortation to Penitence*. Of this opinion Augustine remarks:—

Some say  
that only  
these need  
penance.

"Nor is there occasion to inquire of what value this opinion may be, and whether it is to be corrected or approved, lest we should unduly lengthen our undertaking."<sup>2</sup>

The views of S. Augustine on this important question would have been welcomed by the Church of later days.

S. Augus-  
tine with-  
holds  
judgment.

Before leaving this passage, it may be noted that the expression

<sup>1</sup> Cap. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *De Fide et Operibus*, 19.

*Penitentia humilior.*

*pœnitentia humiliore* is analogous to the *humilitate majore pœnitentiæ* in the passage already quoted from the *De Symbolo*. The penitence proper of Church discipline was distinguished from all other expressions of contrition by its greater abasement.

Three grades of sins.

Farther on in the same treatise *De Fide et Operibus* S. Augustine distinguishes three grades of sins.<sup>1</sup> Some demand exclusion from communion and the "humility of Penance which is given in the Church to those who are properly called penitents." Some are dealt with by our Lord's instruction, "Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone : if he shall hear thee thou hast gained thy brother."<sup>2</sup> Some are such that without them this life is hardly possible. These are met by the petition for pardon in the Lord's prayer.

The *Enchiridion*.

In the *Enchiridion*, or *Handbook*, otherwise styled *Of Faith, Hope and Charity*, S. Augustine refers to the public Church penance for grave sins : and to the satisfaction thus rendered to the Church as a condition of pardon.<sup>3</sup> He writes also of temporal penalties, noting that some persons appear to be pardoned here without punishment, but that the penalties of such are reserved for the after time.<sup>4</sup>

Macedonius, vicar of Africa.

In the year A.D. 414 Macedonius, who as vicar of Africa was charged with the duty of enforcing the imperial decrees against the recusant Donatists, was addressed by Augustine and some other African bishops on behalf of these people. Macedonius graciously complied with their request : but he wrote a courteous letter to Augustine in which he questioned how it could be the duty of the bishops to intercede with a magistrate for persons charged with offences before the law. He argues :—

"For if sins are so forbidden by the Lord that opportunity is not conceded even of repenting of them after the first occurrence ; how can we contend as a part of religion that we ought to remit any offence whatsoever : the which indeed we are approving if we desire it to go unpunished ? " <sup>5</sup>

In the Church penance cannot be repeated.

It will be noted that this high civil officer understands and takes it for granted that in the Christian Church Penance cannot be repeated.

S. Augustine in his reply (*Epist.* 153) has an interesting passage on this point. Referring to those who "after penance accomplished, after the reconciliation of the altar, commit similar or even graver offences," he says of such :—

S. Augustine admits this.

"And although for them in the Church no place of the most humble penance is conceded ; yet GOD is not unmindful of His patience with regard to them. . . . Since, therefore, so great is the patience, so great is the mercy of GOD towards sinners that if their conduct is amended in this temporal life, they are not condemned everlastingly. . . ."

<sup>1</sup> *De Fide et Operibus*, 26.

<sup>2</sup> S. Matt. xviii. 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Enchiridion*, cap. 65.

<sup>4</sup> Cap. 66.

<sup>5</sup> *Epist. ad Augustinum* (152 in S. Augustine's letters).



It thus appears that in Africa as at Rome and at Milan only one Penance in the whole term of life after Baptism was conceded. Also that in the mind of S. Augustine the withholding of present reconciliation in such cases did not bar the possibility of the future mercy of the Lord.

Mercies of the Lord not barred.

Augustine's anticipations as to the future range themselves thus :—

S. Augustine's anticipations as to the future of certain classes of penitents.

- (a) For death-bed penitents of doubtful sincerity there is a doubt as to future blessedness notwithstanding the reconciliation of such penitents by the Church.
- (b) For repeated offenders who are outside the possibility of future reconciliation by the Church a real penitence still has hope of the mercy of the Lord.
- (c) For the sinner who has not sought Penance before danger came, and in the danger has passed from life unreconciled by the Church there is to be apprehended an *exitium* which will sever him from the eternal rest of the faithful.

In the sermon numbered 351 *On the usefulness of doing Penance* (*De utilitate agendæ pœnitentiæ*) Augustine exhorts the sinner who has sinned gravely after Baptism to "come to the bishops (*antistites*) by whom the keys are ministered to him . . . and to accept the measure of his satisfaction from the stewards (*præpositis*) of the sacraments." From this passage it would appear that in Africa Penance was still in ordinary cases administered from the beginning by the bishops. The assignment of the measure of satisfaction by the bishop will also be found prescribed in Canon 43 of the African code.

The sinner to come to the bishops.

In Africa bishops administer Penance from the beginning.

In humbly accepting the penance assigned the sinner will not only benefit himself, but afford an example to others. And if his sin has been not only grave in itself, but a cause of public scandal, and the bishop see fit to assign a penance coming under the notice of many or even of the whole Church, he is not to refuse or to resist. It thus appears that the penance assigned by the bishop in cases not notorious might be a private penance which would not subject the penitent to public observation. The public penance was for the graver offenders, and especially for those whose offences had given public scandal.

The bishop may assign either private or public penance.

This is worthy of notice as one of the earliest Western indications of a principle which came to be generally accepted in later centuries in the Gallic and German churches, that public sins called for public penance, while private sins were adequately met by private penance.

S. Augustine thus teaches that publicity of offence might suitably involve publicity of penance. Yet the man who had sinned without publicity was not to suppose that the matter was simply between himself and God and that Penance was not called for. In

Private offence is not exempt from penance.

Sermon 392 instancing private sins of lust, as when a man had sinned with some woman other than his wife, Augustine says :—

“ Do Penance (*agite pœnitentiam*) as it is done in the Church, that the Church may pray for you. Let no one say to himself, ‘ I do (*ago*) it in private, I do it with God. God who will pardon me knows that I do it in my heart.’ Was it, then, said without reason : ‘ Whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven ’ ? Were the keys given to the Church of GOD without reason ? We render the Gospel, we render the words of Christ of no effect.”

After  
Penance  
the clerical  
state is  
barred.

In Africa, as elsewhere in the West, after Penance the clerical state was barred. In *Epist.* 185, *De Correctione Donatistarum*, he says :—

“ But lest perchance even when his offences were laid bare some puffed-up spirit should proudly do penance in the hope of ecclesiastical honour it was most rigorously enacted that after Penance done for a grave offence (*de crimine damnabili*) none should hold clerical office, in order that by the helplessness of temporal advancement the remedy of humility might be greater and more real.”

The enactment to which he refers cannot be certainly indicated. One canon barring the clerical status to penitents is included in the *Statuta Ecclesiæ Antiqua* (c. 68). The disability is apparently understood by S. Augustine to follow penance only when penance is of the pronounced character required by a *crimen damnabile*.

Novatian-  
ists in  
Africa.

Augustine has various references to the Novatianist community, which was in his day in active existence in Africa as elsewhere. Thus in the *De Agone Christiano*, he says :—

They deny  
that the  
Church can  
remit all  
sins.

“ Nor let us listen to those who deny that the Church of God can remit all sins.”<sup>1</sup>

This was the definite difference between the Catholic Church and Novatianism : the Church asserted her prerogative to remit *all* sins, while the Novatianists denied the claim as regards the capital sins. Augustine goes on to say that because the Novatianists were unwilling to believe that the keys of the kingdom of heaven were given to the Church, they had themselves “ lost them from their hands.” It is interesting to note that the Novatianists at this time, like the Montanists, rejected the second marriage of widows. This also appears from the eighth canon of the Nicene council and from S. Jerome.

Communion  
not  
refused ex-  
cept (1) on  
confession,  
or (2) on  
conviction.

In Sermon 351 occurs the important passage in which S. Augustine states that no one could then be prohibited from communion except (*a*) on his own confession, or (*b*) on his conviction by a civil or ecclesiastical judgment.

<sup>1</sup> § 31.



“ But we are not able to prohibit any one from communion (although this prohibition is not yet mortal, but medicinal), unless he have either confessed of his own accord, or have been named and convicted by some judicial sentence whether secular or ecclesiastical.”

When, however, the episcopal sentence was in fact pronounced, its gravity had to be recognised. In the *De Correptione et Gratia* Augustine points out that there is in the Church no greater penalty.

No greater penalty than the episcopal sentence. Donatists received by imposition of hands.

It will be remembered that at Rome S. Innocent I. had stated that it was usual to receive heretics “ by the imposition of hands after the pattern of Penance.” S. Augustine in his treatise *De Baptismo contra Donatistas* states that while Baptism was not repeated in the case of a Donatist if he had been validly baptized the imposition of the hand was employed, and that if it were not employed such persons would seem to be accounted free of fault. It thus appears that schismatics were reconciled both at Rome and in the African church by the imposition of hands. In the African church the imposition of hands as used after penance was certainly for absolution. This has its bearing on the obscure question of the use of the imposition of hands in connexion with Penance at Rome. In the same treatise S. Augustine had asked regarding the imposition of hands, “ What else is it but a prayer over the man ? ”

The African Code (*Codex Canonum Ecclesiæ Africanæ*) “ as it stands in Mansi comprehends first the deliberations of the council of Carthage, A.D. 419; then the canons of the same synod to the number of 33; then ‘ Canones diversorum conciliorum ecclesiæ Africanæ ’ in the words of their heading, the first of which is numbered 34, in continuous series with the preceding, and the last 138.”<sup>1</sup> “ The general account seems to be that there are sixteen councils of Carthage, one of Milevis, and one of Hippo, whose canons were received and confirmed by the council of A.D. 419 besides its own (Johnson’s *Vade Mecum*, ii. 171); but it is beset with difficulties.”<sup>1</sup>

The African Code. Comprises canons of various councils.

The name *Codex Canonum Ecclesiæ Africanæ* given to this collection by Justellus (A.D. 1614) is too wide, but it is still in common use. Five of the canons of the *Codex* may be cited.

In Canon 7 it is provided that if a person is in danger of death, and seeks to be “ reconciled at the divine altars,” and if the bishop be absent, the priest (*presbyter*) is to consult the bishop, presumably by letter, and to reconcile the dying man in accordance with the bishop’s instructions (*ejus præcepto*). This canon makes it clear that the bishop was the ordinary minister of reconciliation in Africa as at Rome at the beginning of the fifth century.

Priest reconciles the dying on bishop’s instructions.

Canon 43 orders that the duration of penance is to be assigned by the judgment of the bishops to suit the varying gravity of offences; and that a priest is not to reconcile a penitent without

Bishops assign duration. Priest not

<sup>1</sup> Ffoulkes, Art. “ African Councils,” in the *Dic. Christian Antiquities*

to act  
without  
necessity.

Imposition  
of hands  
in front  
of the apse.

reference to the bishop unless compelled by the necessity arising from the absence of the bishop. Here the absence of the bishop is recognised as likely to impose upon the priest the duty of acting independently. The same canon goes on to order that when the offence of the penitent is a notorious offence which has given scandal to the Church generally, the imposition of hands is to take place in front of the apse or sacrarium (*ante absidem manus ei imponatur*). This imposition of hands appears to be the formal absolution or reconciliation. The instruction may be compared with the phrase of Canon 7, "at the divine altars."<sup>1</sup>

Canon 27 is as follows :—

Clerical  
offenders  
not to  
receive im-  
position of  
hands.

"It was ratified that if, when priests or deacons have been convicted of any graver offence (*graviori culpa*) for which it is necessary that they should be removed from the ministry, the hand is not to be laid upon them as upon penitents, or as upon faithful lay-people; nor is it to be permitted that those who have been rebaptized should be promoted to any degree of clerical office."

The two  
kinds of  
imposition  
of hands.

It has been noted from the canons already cited that penitents were reconciled with a formal imposition of hands: and it has been previously noticed that at least in some churches the whole course of penance appears to have been accompanied on solemn occasions by an imposition of hands, which must have been rather an expression of the sympathy of the Church than the act of her reconciliation. Which of these two kinds of imposition of hands is meant in the canon now under notice? In the case of the penitents referred to the imposition of hands may have been either that of reconciliation, or that of recognition during the penitential course. Another laying on of hands is referred to, that upon faithful lay-people, and as these are distinguished from penitents, the reference cannot well be to lay penitents. Was the laying on of hands in their case confirmation? At any rate the offending priests or deacons were not to receive any such imposition of hands.

Heretical  
rebaptism.

The act of apostasy from the Catholic Church at this period took the form of accepting the iteration of baptism at the hands of heretical persecutors, and the same disabilities were to attach to clerical offenders as in the case of apostasy to paganism. They might be admitted on their return among the laity, the deprivation of clerical standing taking the place of penance; but clerical office and ministrations were for ever barred.

Recon-  
ciliation at  
death not  
to be re-  
fused to  
actors.

Canon 45 after giving directions for the baptism of sick persons unable to answer for themselves goes on to rule that reconciliation is not to be refused in sickness to professional actors (*scenicis, atque histrionibus, ceterisque hujusmodi personis*), who could only in ordinary times be accepted after they had renounced their calling.

<sup>1</sup> *Theodore's Penitential* states that in the West reconciliation is within the apse, and that it is by the bishop on the *Cæna Domini*. (*Lib. i. c. 13, De Reconciliatione.*)



The Greek version of this canon, itself older than the Trullan council, inserts after the words quoted "or to apostates repenting (μετανοοῦσι) and turning to GOD."

Canon 132 runs as follows :—

"That if, when a bishop says that some person has confessed his fault to himself (the bishop) alone, and the person has denied it, and declined to do penance; the bishop is not to consider it matter of injury if credence is not accorded to his unsupported testimony, although on ground of scruple he declares himself unwilling to communicate with the person denying."

Case of a person who after confession to a bishop denies the offence.

This canon presents various features of interest. The confession of fault to the bishop alone is private confession; and appears to be regarded as ordinary. The person confessing refuses to do penance, at least the penance assigned. The bishop, without any sense of obligation resting upon him to keep the "seal" of the confession, publishes the avowal, and that without any reproof on the part of the council, or any notice drawn to the circumstance as unusual or irregular. The person who had made the confession to the bishop alone denies the offence which the bishop has published. Within the cognizance of the council it is now the statement of one Christian against another, and the episcopal office is not permitted to bear down the layman. The bishop is not to take this as an injury. His conscience may indeed lead him to refuse to communicate with the person. In that he will take his own line.

Another collection of African canons is cited above under the heading of *Statuta Ecclesiæ Antiqua*. These canons, 104 in number, appear in Mansi, following the Spanish collections, as canons of a council of Carthage held in A.D. 398. This ascription was rejected as spurious by Justellus, and later by the Ballerini. A synod of 214 bishops would have been the greatest and most remarkable of the African synods, but nothing is known of such an assembly in A.D. 398. There is no mention of it by Dionysius Exiguus, or by Ferrandus, or by the Carthaginian synod of A.D. 525. In the judgment of the Ballerini<sup>1</sup> these 104 canons are the compilation of a private individual, who collected that number of ancient canons partly from African and partly from other synods, of which some were Eastern. In the Italian MSS. the collection is styled *Statuta Orientis*. In the Gallican MSS. the heading is *Statuta Ecclesiæ Antiqua*, and this heading is adopted here. Hefele says: "Probably this collection originated after the commencement of the Pelagian and Monophysite controversies, but still before the end of the sixth century, when it was adopted into other collections."<sup>2</sup> The date thus indicated by Hefele is the date of

The *Statuta Ecclesiæ Antiqua*.

<sup>1</sup> S. Leo III. lxxxviii. (Migne, P. L., LVII. 107.)

<sup>2</sup> Hefele, *History of the Councils*, English edition, II. 410.

Many of these canons may be assigned to first half of fifth century.

the collection, and must not be confused with the dates of the canons themselves. Of these no doubt the dates if we knew them would be various, but the first half of the fifth century may perhaps be assumed for a large proportion of them.<sup>1</sup>

The numbering of these canons is not the same in all the MSS. The numbers given above are those which appear in Mansi, while the alternative numbers in brackets refer to the order of the collection as published by the Ballerini in the appendix to their edition of the works of S. Leo.<sup>2</sup>

Canon 68 rules :—

Selected canons. Penitents not to be ordained.

“ From among the penitents let none be ordained a clerk, though he be good. If by the ignorance of the bishop this have been already done, let the person be deposed from among the clergy because at the time of ordination he did not make it known that he had been a penitent. If, however, the bishop have knowingly ordained such a person let him also be deprived of the power of ordination proper to his episcopate, but of that only.”

Penalties.

The canon thus enacts the rigorous exclusion of all who have once done public penance from all possibility of ordination. It may be the enactment to which S. Augustine refers in his *Epistle De Correctione Donatistarum* (185). The provision which appears to contemplate the continuance of the offending bishop in his office, while deprived of his power of ordination, is remarkable.

Priest to impose the laws of Penance without respect of persons.

In Canon 74 it is ruled that the priest (*sacerdos*) is to impose the laws of Penance upon any supplicating for Penance, without regard to person. The priest might often be the bishop, but not, as has been seen, always. The word *sacerdos* is not now confined to bishops. The according of Penance is a formal and definite act of the priest conferring a status. There are *leges pœnitentiæ*, laws of Penance, which have to be followed. These may have dealt with sins according to their gravity, and have indicated the place of public penance, its circumstances, and its duration.

The negligent to be kept longer.

Canon 75 rules that the more negligent penitents should be “received more tardily.” They would be kept longer in the status of penitents before their reconciliation.

Canon 76 is as follows :—

Penitents in sickness.

“ He who in his sickness seeks Penance, if it happen that while the priest (*sacerdos*) who has been sent for is coming he (the sick man), overcome by his infirmity, have lost speech, or have fallen into delirium, let those who heard him (making request) give their testimony, and so let him be admitted as a penitent. And if he still be believed to be on the point of death, let him be reconciled by the imposition of

<sup>1</sup> M. Malmory confidently assigns the compilation of the *Statuta* to S. Cæsarius of Arles. (*S. Césaire d'Arles* [fasc. 103 in the *Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études*].)

<sup>2</sup> Migne, *P. L.*, LVI. 887.



hands, and let the Eucharist be poured into his mouth. If he shall survive let him be notified by the aforesaid witnesses that his petition was complied with : and let him be subjected to the appointed laws of Penance for so long as the priest who has given the (state of) Penance shall have approved."

Here much stress is laid upon the voluntary character of the request for Penance. If witnesses can bear this out, the state or condition of a penitent may be accorded, notwithstanding the inability of a sick man to express himself farther. The sick man being now recognised as a penitent may as a penitent have the privilege of reconciliation on the approach of death. That reconciliation is accorded by the priest (*sacerdos*) who is not here expected to make any reference outside. In a small church the *sacerdos* might be the bishop himself. In the larger churches the priest sent for would almost certainly not be the bishop. The priest is to reconcile not merely by according communion, but by a formal act : and that act is the imposition of hands here made expressly for the purpose of reconciliation (*reconcilietur per manus impositionem*). If the sick man recover he is to fulfil his penance according to the assignment of the priest. The early instances of penance fulfilled after absolution received are of interest in view of later practice.

Canon 77 reiterates the provision of former councils that any penitent may receive the Viaticum in grave sickness. That penitents were sometimes thus communicated without receiving formal absolution is clear from the next canon.

Canon 78 :—

"Penitents who in sickness have received the Viaticum of the Eucharist, if they shall have survived, are not to hold themselves absolved without the imposition of the hand."

If penitents recover they are to seek the imposition of the hand.

Here again the imposition of the hand is mentioned as the express sign and accompaniment of a reconciliation which is not to be dispensed with even after communion if the circumstances of emergency have passed. The question is suggested : What was there to hinder the death-bed imposition of hands before communion, as indicated in Canon 76 ? The probable answer is that Canons 77 and 78 are not canons of the same council with Canon 76, and that they indicate a divergent practice, such practice being the actual reconciliation of the penitent by the priest in the act of according communion, while the formal reconciliation by imposition of hands was deferred, being probably reserved for the bishop if the penitent should live to claim it.

Canon 79 rules :—

"Penitents who attentively follow the laws of Penance if it happen that they have died when travelling by land or sea without the opportunity of spiritual succour (*ubi eis subveniri*)

Penitents without opportunity.

*non possit*) let their memorial be commended both in the prayers and in the offerings."

The Church here recognises that those who pass away in good will unreconciled by no fault of theirs may find a place in the commemorations of the faithful departed. She has not reconciled them: but she is here willing to assume that her Master has.

Imposition  
of hands in  
Lent.

Canon 80 gives instruction "that the hand is to be laid by the priests upon the penitents *omni tempore jejunii*." What does this mean? (1) At any time in Lent, or (2) at every season of Lent, or (3) during the whole season of Lent? If the imposition of hands here indicated is the imposition of hands for the reconciliation of the penitent, as it certainly is in Canons 76 and 78, the first of these interpretations appears to be the most suitable. Whereas in Rome penitents were reconciled by a formal solemnity on the Thursday in Holy Week, and then proceeded to make their communions on Easter Day; in the African churches the reconciliation might take place at any time in Lent.

If, however, the imposition of hands be understood as the ceremony in the public Liturgy which recognised the status of the penitent, the meaning of the words *omni tempore jejunii* might rather be "during the whole time of Lent," or "on every occasion in Lent."

Penitents  
bury the  
dead.

Canon 81 instructs that penitents are to bring the dead to the church and to bury them. The sentiment which regarded this office as befitting penitents still finds expression in the interesting burial fraternities of Italy.

Penitents  
kneel.

Canon 82, which rules that penitents are to kneel even on "days of remission," appears to indicate that penitents generally in the African church were in their outward observance most akin to the grade of *Fallers* or *Kneelers* in the Eastern graded system.

The heathen  
may hear  
the word  
of GOD.

Canon 84 orders that no bishop is to prohibit any person, though he be heathen, heretic, or Jew, from entering the church, and hearing the word of GOD as far as the *missa catechumenorum*. It is unlikely that any penitents would be more severely excluded.

Review of  
the African  
evidence.

The African  
church is a  
Western  
church.

The impression left by the African evidence is that while it has few affinities with the course of experience in the Eastern churches, there is a general agreement of procedure with the Latin churches of the Italian peninsula. This might indeed have been expected, as the African church had always been a Latin and Western church not less in the days of Tertullian or of S. Cyprian than now. Also Africa was at this time included in the civil prefecture of Italy, and there was constant and easy communication across the Mediterranean. The familiar examples of S. Augustine and S. Monica show how readily Africans of Christian training could find their place at Milan, while the little incident of the African practice of offering cakes and wine at the shrines of the martyrs, which S. Ambrose would not permit at Milan,



shows at the same time local diversity. A general agreement with Italian usage, alongside of considerable difference of detail, may be taken as characterising the African churches. The actual population of Africa must indeed have differed from that of Rome or of Milan in some measure as the population of Bombay or of Mauritius now differs from that of England, or as the population of Algeria now differs from that of France. If there was a considerable Latin element, pure and mixed, there was also the Semitic element, and, immensely superior to both in numerical strength, the native Berber population. And in the period now under review there was added to existing conditions of difference the pressure of the difficulties arising from the Vandal invasion.

Africa shows a procedure of Penance effectively surviving from earlier days. No capital sin is now outside its scope. The penitents still have their separated place in the church, where they are well in the sight of all. They are known to have been guilty of grave offence. Some hold that such penance is only called for by the three capital sins of impurity, apostasy, and bloodshed. There is but one Penance after Baptism. The bishop is the ordinary minister of Penance. The priest may take his place upon occasion. Solemn reconciliation takes place in front of the apse by the imposition of the bishop's hand. No penitent may be ordained.

Procedure  
of Penance.

By the side of all this is coming on the later relaxation. None are in practice excluded from communion except those who voluntarily confess, and those who have come under some public sentence, civil or ecclesiastical. The rest of the community seem to stand aloof. Many who ought to be doing penance communicate without it. A considerable proportion of the Christian population belong to a permanent catechumenate, and put off their Baptism till emergency presses. Another section of the community consists of baptized persons who have committed grave sins after Baptism, and who put off their penitence and reconciliation till they too are faced by the pressure of emergency. If there be any truth in the terrible invective of Salvianus, which will be adverted to later, the moral condition of the Christian community in Africa in the first half of the fifth century was deplorable indeed. For those, however, who would accept the discipline of the Church, she had her discipline; and it was essentially a discipline after the manner of the West.

Growing  
relaxation.

The evidence of this section has been chiefly concerned with the practice of the Catholic Church, a glance being given to Novatianism. In the Africa of this age there was, however, another schismatical body, that of the Donatists, which had attained to prevalence and importance. Some references to this body by S. Augustine have been noticed. A treatise by S. Optatus, bishop of Milevis (c. A.D. 375) entitled *De Schismate Donatistarum*

The  
Donatists.

S. Optatus  
of Milevis.

Associated  
penance.

affords some interesting particulars with regard to the Donatist practice of penance. It is the complaint of Optatus that the Donatists in the case of Catholics who joined them imposed upon these converts the status of penance for being Catholics. The actual penalties imposed were not, according to Optatus, uniform in severity; one being sentenced to do penance for a year, another for a month, another hardly for a full day. But so far as the case admitted they undertook their acts of public penance together and in common; the result to the onlooker being that their outward acts of penitential observance showed the bowing of a row of heads, the drill of a mass or clump of penitents.

“Matrons, boys, maidens, all at once, under compulsion from you, no sin having occurred, their innocence and modesty intact, have learnt to do penance with you as their instructors. . . . These people you have compelled to bend, and to incline their necks, and by the joining of a row of heads to make a clump of penitents.”<sup>1</sup>

This notice becomes of interest in view of the later development of associated or congregational penitence in the churches of Western Europe.

Imposition  
of hands.

It appears farther from the treatise of Optatus that in the case of Catholic Christians who became Donatists there was for clergy and laity alike a laying on of hands, and the covering of the person's head with the penitential veil. These ceremonies were a recognition of penitential need: but a laying on of hands, whether on the same occasion of exercise or not, was also the act of reconciliation; and was immediately followed by the turning to the altar of the ministrant for the recitation of the Lord's Prayer.

“For when ye seduce any ye promise that ye will give them the forgiveness of sins: and when ye undertake to forgive sins, ye profess your own innocence. . . . For in succeeding moments ye first lay your hands for the forgiveness of sins, and then turning to the altar are unable to leave out the Lord's Prayer.”<sup>2</sup>

It may be understood that this was the practice in Africa of the Catholic Church also; to lay hands for the forgiveness of sins, and then to turn to the altar and say the Lord's Prayer.

The fifth and sixth centuries will have some further evidence to show for the churches of Africa and Mauretania. And then over Christian Africa with its great historic past will be thrown the extinguishing pall of the Mohammedan conquest.

<sup>1</sup> II. 26.

<sup>2</sup> II. 20.



7. *Spain and Gaul.*

Christian Spain at the end of the fourth century was perhaps less closely connected with the churches of Italy, with Rome and with Milan, than was the case with the African churches. Africa at this time, indeed, formed part of the civil prefecture of Italy. Intercourse between Italy and Africa was considerable and constant. Spain formed part of the prefecture of the Gauls, and the central administration of the prefecture was not in Italy, but at Trèves. Italy was, in fact, a long way off. At the same time the geographical position of the Spanish peninsula with no neighbours to the West, and but few at all, tended to emphasise the provincial character of the Spanish church. It was noticed in connexion with the remarkable canons of the Council of Illiberis (c. A.D. 306) that the true explanation of those canons lay in the fact that the Spanish church had not yet moved from the pre-Decian position, whereas all the rest of Christendom had advanced in the direction of leniency. But by A.D. 314, if we may judge by the subscriptions to the canons of the Council of Arles the Spanish church also had fallen into line, and was willing to reconcile the capital offender in the article of death.

The Spanish church provincial.

For the second half of the fourth century the chief Spanish testimony is that of S. Pacian, bishop of Barcelona. S. Jerome says that Pacian was renowned both for the purity of his life and for his eloquence. It is known that the death of Pacian occurred before the close of the reign of Theodosius; and it may be assigned to c. A.D. 391. He had then attained to an advanced age. If it is understood that he succeeded Prætextatus as bishop of Barcelona in A.D. 343 he had occupied the see for nearly half a century.

S. Pacian.

On the subject of Penance the important writings of S. Pacian are his three *Letters to Sympronianus*, and his *Exhortation to Penitence*.

Sympronianus was a Novatianist, whom, however, Pacian treats with much respect, addressing him as "Brother." Sympronianus in the course of his correspondence with Pacian sent him a treatise (*tractatus Novatianorum*) which is summarised by Pacian as containing three propositions:—

Letters to Sympronianus.

- (1) That it is not permitted to do Penance after Baptism (*post baptismum pœnitere non liceat*).
- (2) That the Church cannot remit mortal sin.
- (3) That in receiving sinners the Church herself perishes.

Novatianist principles as stated by Sympronianus.

It appears, then, that in the later decades of the fourth century Novatianists in Spain no longer, like their founder, approved the practice of penance (without reconciliation) for capital offenders; also that they did not, like the contemporary Novatianists addressed by S. Ambrose at Milan, practise penance for offences

Novatianists in Spain do not practise penance.

not capital; but that they la'd down the broad general principle that Penance after Baptism was inadmissible.

After  
Baptism  
Penance  
should not  
be required.

Pacian in the first of his three letters to Sympronianus expresses what was undoubtedly the mind of all Christian antiquity when he says :—

“ With regard to Penance, indeed, God grant that it may not be necessary to any of the faithful; that no one after the assistance given in the sacred font may plunge into the pitfall of death; and that the priests may not be compelled either to apply or to teach later consolations (*tarda solamina*) lest they open the way of sinning whilst they coax the sinner with remedies.”

The normal condition of the faithful should know nothing of the need of Penance. So far Catholic and Novatianist are at one.

“ But if the serpent has such lasting venom, shall Christ not have the medicine? If the devil can slay in this world, shall Christ be here powerless to render aid?”

Yet God  
has pardon  
for the  
penitent.

He goes on to argue that God would never threaten the impenitent, unless he were prepared to pardon the penitent.

“ You say that God alone could do this. True; but what He does by His priests is still the exercise of His own power. For what is that which he saith to the Apostles: ‘ Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven ’? Why this, if it was not permitted to men to bind and loose? Or is this permitted to the Apostles alone? Then it is also to them alone that it is permitted to baptize, to them alone to give the Holy Spirit, to them alone to purge the sins of the nations: because all this is commanded to no others than to the Apostles.”

The power  
of absolu-  
tion is  
God's.

The Chris-  
tian  
ministry  
holds the  
commis-  
sion given  
to the  
Apostles.

Analogy  
of the  
priest's  
ministry in  
Penance  
and in  
Baptism.

Bishops  
the ordin-  
ary  
ministers.

S. Pacian here asserts two great Catholic principles of Penance: (1) that the power of absolution is God's power, exercised by His ministers on His behalf, and (2) that the commission given to the Apostles was given to the Christian ministry for all time.

In the third letter to Sympronianus Pacian reiterates the teaching that the remission of sins is due to God alone, Whose power is exercised by the priest alike in Penance and in Baptism. It will be remembered that the argument from the analogy of Baptism was also used by S. Ambrose.

In the same letter he uses words which imply that the bishops were the ordinary ministers of binding.

“ Now, how subtilly dost thou set aside that position of mine that power was given to the bishops, that whatsoever they should bind upon earth should be bound also in heaven.”



The *Exhortation to Penitence* (*Parænesis ad Pœnitentiam*) has three sections. Of these the first deals with the sins which are the proper subject of Penance, "lest any should suppose that all sins soever call for this supreme treatment." He lays down that the three capital sins of idolatry, bloodshed and fornication alone call for the formal Penance of the Church. All other sins may be sufficiently met by the exercise of the contrary virtues. It will be noted that this matter of the sins proper for Penance, which was the subject of grave debate in Africa, and with regard to which S. Augustine forbore to express himself, is settled by S. Pacian with decision. Penance is called for by idolatry, bloodshed, and impurity, and by nothing else. He is, however, careful to add that all these sins may be committed by the desires of the heart.

The *Parænesis ad Pœnitentiam*. Formal penance only required for the three capital sins.

In his teaching on this point Pacian makes the interesting citation of the *Apostolic Decree* which was noted above in connexion with the passage in the Acts. He quotes the *Decree* as specifying "things offered to idols, and blood, and fornication (*Necesse est ut abstineatis ab idolothytis et sanguine et fornicatione*)."

S. Pacian's reading of the Apostolic Decree.

He is therefore a witness to the reading which Dr. Resch advocates as the true reading of the passage.

The second section of the *Exhortation* treats of those who, being guilty of such sins, do yet communicate without having done Penance. This is clearly a growing practice of the time. S. Augustine has referred to it as having some vogue in Africa, and calls upon his hearers not to let this known practice deter them from seeking Penance. To S. Pacian, as indeed to S. Augustine, the practice is simply an abuse.

Sinners who communicate without Penance;

"First I appeal to you, brethren, who when you have admitted sins withhold the penance, you, I say, who after shamelessness are timid, after sins are modest, who do not blush to sin, but blush to confess: who, with an evil conscience touch the Holy Things of God, and have no fear of the altar of the Lord; who in the sight of the angels approach as under the security of innocence to the hands of the priest; who insult the Divine patience; who bring to God a polluted soul and a profane body as to one who knows not because He speaks not.

such Penance involving confession.

"For sinners in such sort it will be a mercy if they are stricken with sickness or death in this world rather than with the punishment of the world to come."

The requirement of *confession* as the first and most obvious element of Penance will be noted.

In the third place Pacian treats of those "who have made a good confession and disclosed their sins, but who either are ignorant of or withhold the remedies of penance, and the very acts of administering the exomologesis." This is a remarkable development. Here are persons who are willing to make a good

Some confess but withhold the exercises of penance.

confession; who, in fact, do all that is seriously asked in the modern system of the Western Church; but who withdraw themselves from the public exercises of penance, which have hitherto been customary and expected in the Church. Pacian is not referring to the disabilities after Penance accomplished which at Rome had become so pronounced, nor is he only concerned with the unseemliness of the generally unchastened conduct of these penitents during their course of penance, though of this he has much to say; but he states that it is a practice to withhold "the very acts of the exomologesis."

Such acts would cover the place and posture of the penitent in the church, and the garb and seeming of affliction. The penance of Fabiola, Sozomen's description of the Roman practice, S. Augustine's references to the penitents to be seen in the churches of Africa, recur to the mind. In the Spanish churches even those who have made their confessions are leaving all such penance aside. After this it is not surprising to learn that their conduct out of doors had no markedly penitential character. In their very time of penance (*in ipsa pœnitentia*) they filled themselves full at dinner parties, they took pains with their persons at the baths, they were careful in their attire, they had their periodical outings in the country or at the sea, they had their tastes in wines and food, to say nothing of their huckstering, trafficking, over-reaching, of their having no bounty for the poor or for their brethren.

The un-  
chastened  
conduct of  
penitents.

The con-  
duct which  
becomes a  
penitent.

Pacian's description of the conduct which would beseeem a penitent is of interest.

"We do not even those things which may be seen by the priest, and be commended by the bishop who witnesses them; even these things we do not daily observe; to weep in the sight of the Church, to mourn a lost life by a sordid vesture, to fast, to pray, to prostrate ourselves; if any should call us to the bath, to refuse its delights; if any should invite us to a banquet, to say, 'These things are for the happy ones; I have offended against the Lord, and am in danger of perishing everlastingly; how is there place for feasts for me, who have done injury to the Lord?' In addition, to hold the hands of the poor, to beseech the widows, to be prostrate at the feet of the priests, to beseech the Church, prevailing in her supplications, to try everything rather than to perish."

Such was the conduct of those penitents of whom Pacian had no complaint to make. Some, he says, he knows who, without perhaps sin so grave, wrap their breasts in hair-cloth (*cilicio*), lie in ashes, keep long fasts. Those who will not accept some due affliction may expect Tartarus and Gehenna. And

"in the lower regions (*apud inferos*) there is no exomologesis; nor can penance then be rendered, when the time of penance is past."



The picture which the *Parænesis* presents of penance commonly withheld even when confession was made, and in other cases, perhaps frequent, of confession itself withheld by persons who yet claimed their status as Catholic Christians, is remarkable, when it is remembered that Pacian does not insist for a moment that penance need be done for any but the three capital sins of apostasy, bloodshed, and impurity; although these sins are understood to cover words and desires as well as acts. If without any grave or general condemnation by their fellows the Christian penitents of Spain could decline all serious penance and all disabilities, even during their term of satisfaction; it is fairly evident that the continuance of disabilities after the term of satisfaction would have no serious existence. The Roman development of continued disabilities would hardly under such conditions find a home, and the instructions of Siricius to Himerius of Tarragona on this point in A.D. 385 would probably meet with but little response.

Disabilities after penance could hardly have been real.

The First Council of Toledo was held in September of the year A.D. 400 under the presidency of the bishop Patronus or Patruinus. Nineteen bishops assembled. The second of the canons runs as follows :—

First Council of Toledo.

“It was agreed that no penitent be admitted among the clergy except that, if necessity or custom call for it, he may be reckoned among the doorkeepers or the readers: but so that he do not read the gospels and the Apostle (epistle). If, however, any have been previously ordained deacons, let them be accounted among the sub-deacons; but so that they do not lay their hand, or touch the sacred things. We call him a penitent who after Baptism, for homicide or for various crimes and sins of great gravity, has done penance covered with haircloth, and has so been reconciled to the divine altar.”

Penitents not admissible among the clergy.

The definition of a penitent here given is of interest as describing the technical penitent in Spain at the end of the fourth century. He is a person who after Baptism has committed heinous sins. The penance which he is called upon to undertake involves his public appearance covered with haircloth. In due course he is “reconciled to the divine altar,” which is better understood to signify restoration to communion than the ceremonial reconciliation before the altar which was the use of the African churches.

Description of a penitent.

From the Gaul of this period there are not many pronouncements which call for notice. Two canons of the Council of Orange held in A.D. 441 will be found cited above. This council had S. Hilary of Arles for its president. Canon 3 is as follows :—

Gaul.

“In the case of those who are departing from the body, it was resolved that communion should be accorded them

The dying communi-

cated with-  
out im-  
position of  
hands.

without the reconciliatory imposition of the hand (*sine reconciliatoria manus impositione*). This suffices for the consolation of the dying according to the determination of the fathers, who fitly styled this sort of communion *viaticum*. If, however, they survive, they are to stand in the rank of the penitents (*in ordine pœnitentium*), and when the necessary fruits of penitence have been exhibited, let them receive the regular communion (*legitimam communionem*) with the reconciliatory imposition of the hand."

From this canon it appears that in the southern churches of Gaul the practice of communicating the dying without the formal imposition of hands in absolution was recognised and prescribed. It will be remembered that in the collection of canons cited as *Statuta Ecclesiæ Antiqua* canons are found which indicate a varying practice. Canon 76 prescribed a reconciliation by the imposition of the priest's hand before the death-bed communion. Canon 78, evidently the pronouncement of another council, laid down that if the sick man after communion recovered, he was not to consider himself absolved without the imposition of the hand. This was the practice approved at Orange. One result of the formal and public administration of absolution by imposition of hands would no doubt be that the bishop would officiate as in Italy and in Africa.

Penance  
not denied  
to clerks.

Canon 4, which rules that Penance is not to be denied even to clerks who ask for it, is an exceptional pronouncement, which does not find any parallel elsewhere.

Salvianus  
of Mar-  
seilles.

The practice of southern Gaul may be farther illustrated by a passage in a letter of Salvianus of Marseilles to a bishop named Salonius.<sup>1</sup> In this letter Salvianus states that

General  
refusal of  
exomolo-  
gesis and  
satisfaction,

"Very many and nearly all, though at once well-to-do and conscious of their crimes and offences, not only disdain to atone for the faults they have allowed by exomologesis and satisfaction, but even, in the way very easy to them, by gifts and charities." <sup>2</sup>

It appears from this passage that the same tendencies as those of which S. Pacian complains in Spain were noticeable in Gaul. Offenders held aloof from confession and satisfaction.

yet Pen-  
ance con-  
tinued in  
use.  
S. Hilary  
of Arles.  
His ad-  
ministra-  
tion of  
penance.

Yet in southern Gaul there was at this time no such general disuse of the ordinance of Penance as had come about at Constantinople. In a life of S. Hilary of Arles (A.D. 401-449), written by one of his disciples, occurs an interesting description of S. Hilary's administration of Penance.

"As often as he administered Penance (*pœnitentiam dedit*) frequently on the Lord's day there flocked to him a varied crowd. They flew to receive his chastisement, and whosoever

<sup>1</sup> For some notice of Salvianus, see next section.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep.* 9, *Ad Salonium*.



would be present bathed himself in showers of tears, terrified by the heavenly judgments, inflamed by the (heavenly) promises. So many groans, so many tears were aroused in the bystanders, that the habitation of this present life became abhorrent to them. Who so depicted the ordeal of the judgment to come? Who so expressed the flood of torment whether of fire or force? Who so brought before the eyes for inspection the wounds of conscience? When the admonition was completed he with tears commenced the supplications, that so he might confirm by prayer the fruit of penitence which he had aroused by the admonition. Thus a certain blind woman, while she was being blessed by the imposition of his hand, cried out that she had received her sight. I think that he had first afforded to the inner man what he afterwards obtained for the outer. She, after receiving her sight, no longer needed a guide for her path.”<sup>1</sup>

In this passage S. Hilary is shown as in the habit of administering Penance as bishop. The administration is far from being a mere survival. Flocks of people crowd to him. His procedure is:—

- (1) An admonition, vividly depicting the terrors of the Lord, and not omitting the promises of mercy. It included  
(1) an admonition,
- (2) Supplications, which he himself in tears at least began (*supplicationum sumebat exordia*). (2) supplications,
- (3) The laying on of hands. (3) laying on of hands.

The laying on of hands in this case appears to be rather for the admission or recognition of the penitent than for absolution. So also the Council of Agde (A.D. 506) mentions such an imposition of hands, to which was added the giving of the haircloth.

The date of the Second Council of Arles is variously given as A.D. 443 and A.D. 452. The twenty-second canon of this council is evidence of what has otherwise appeared that public penance involved the disuse of the cohabitation of marriage.

“That Penance is not to be given to married persons except by (mutual) consent.”

There was now growing in the Church a sense of the impossibility of applying to every kind of person the strict requirements of the penitential system. A few years later S. Cæsarius of Arles will be found expressing himself to the effect that he does not look for public penance from young married men, or from those in military service.

In this place may best be noticed the *De cœnobiorum institutis* of Cassian. The practice of confession as a habit of the monastic life had in its beginnings nothing to do with the ordinance of Penance in the Church for the remission of the graver sins. But in the evolution of the modern penitential system of the Church the Cassian.  
The *De cœnobiorum institutis*.  
Beginnings of monastic confession.

<sup>1</sup> *S. Hilarii Arelatensis vita, ab auctore ejusdem S. Hilarii discipulo scripta.*

monastic practice of recurring confession will be found later on to play an important part. Its beginnings should therefore receive careful attention. One of the earliest of the monastic codes which indicate the practice of confession as a habit of the monastic life is the *De cœnobiorum institutis* of Cassian. The date of this treatise may be given as A.D. 429.

John Cassian was born, perhaps in Syria,<sup>1</sup> in the middle of the fourth century. His parents sent him to be educated in a monastery at Bethlehem. About A.D. 390 he and his friend Germanus set forth, with leave of absence for seven years, to study by personal observation the life of those ascetics in the Egyptian Thebaid, who were known to Latin Christians as the *renuntiantes*. About A.D. 403 Cassian is found at Constantinople; about A.D. 405 at Rome. Somewhat later he founded two monasteries in the neighbourhood of Marseilles. It is with the church of Southern Gaul that he may be best identified.

In the fourth book of the *De cœnobiorum institutis*, which is headed *De institutis renuntiantium*, Cassian recalls the practice partly of the Egyptian monks, and partly of those of Tabenna. He says that in their pursuit of perfection, that they may the more readily attain to it, they are enjoined not by a baneful sense of shame to conceal any thoughts of the heart, however prurient, but as soon as they shall have arisen, to lay them bare before the senior.

The eight principal vices.

This is perhaps the earliest notice on record of the practice of confession as a habit of the devout life, and without any reference to the obtaining the reconciliation of the Church in the ordinance of Penance after the commission of grave sin. In the fifth book of the same treatise Cassian has a passage which contains that enumeration of the eight principal vices, which in the ninth century became one of the commonplaces of clerical training. Cassian enumerates as the principal vices: (1) gluttony, (2) fornication, (3) avarice, (4) anger, (5) despondency (*tristitia*), (6) moroseness (*acedia*), (7) vainglory, (8) pride.

#### 8. *The Moral Condition of Western Christendom in the Fifth Century.*

The un-assimilated element in the Church.

All students of the disciplinary practice of the Christian Church do well to keep before their minds one necessary caution. The pronouncements of councils, the writings of teachers, the sermons of preachers, do not cover the whole ground. There is always to be reckoned with an unearnest stratum of adherents who will not come readily or willingly into any system of discipline, but who yet claim to find inclusion in the Christian fold. In the fourth and fifth centuries, the centuries which saw the great influx of the world into the Church, this refractory or unassimilated element

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Merkle of Würzburg would find the birthplace of Cassian in the lesser Scythia (Roumania or Bulgaria). (*Theologische Quartalschrift*, 1900, p. 419.)



appears to have been so large and so influential as to have constituted a real menace to the faithful existence of the Church of Christ.

In a work already threatening to be bulky it is not possible to pursue any lengthened investigations into the moral condition of Christendom. But it may be of some service in correcting the outlook resulting from the study of the records of Penance if reference be here made to the evidence of two writers of this period, Salvianus of Marseilles and Paulinus of Pella.

Salvianus was in his mature years a much-respected priest of Marseilles. He was born towards the close of the fourth century, perhaps at Trèves. In early manhood he married, but he and his wife after the birth of their first child agreed to adopt an ascetic life. He is referred to by S. Hilary of Arles, who in one of his sermons calls him "the excellent and in Christ most blessed man, Salvianus the presbyter."<sup>1</sup> In a treatise in five books addressed to the bishop Salonius, and generally known by the title *De Gubernatione Dei*, he addresses himself to a problem which then much exercised the minds of thoughtful men. If GOD governed His world, why had the Roman power been suffered to be borne down by the barbarian incursions?

Salvianus  
of Mar-  
seilles.

The *De*  
*Guber-*  
*natione Dei.*

The treatise of Salvianus puts forward the argument that the Roman population, which he treats as now practically identical with the Christian community, had by their conduct deserved the Divine visitation. It is evident that the argument is most of service if the offenders are shown to have greatly offended. And also Salvianus is rather a rhetorician than a recorder of history, and may not unreasonably be questioned as he goes. But his argument is addressed to his contemporaries who knew the facts, and, though there may be considerable exaggeration, the picture must still have been recognisable, or the argument would have failed.

The Divine  
visitation  
deserved  
by the  
Romans.

Here is a terrible indictment :—

"The very Church of GOD, which ought to be in all the appeaser of GOD, what is she else but the provoker of GOD? or, outside some very few, who flee from evil, what else is almost every assembly of Christians but a sink of vices? For how many will you find in the Church, of whom it can be said that he is not either a drunkard, or a glutton, or an adulterer, or a fornicator, or a ravisher, or dissolute, or a thief, or a homicide? and, what is worse than any, these various offences well-nigh endlessly repeated (*sine fine*). For I question the conscience of all Christian men. Of the crimes and offences which we have here enumerated, how many men are there of whom it can be said that he is not guilty of one

Prevalence  
of grave  
sins.

<sup>1</sup> "*Egregius et in Christo beatissimus vir, Salvianus Presbyter.*"

of them, or perhaps of all? You will more readily find a man who offends in all than one who offends in none.”<sup>1</sup>

Masters  
worse than  
slaves.

In some respects the masters are worse than the slaves :—

“ For who among slaves has troops of concubines, who is polluted by the stain of many wives, and after the manner of dogs or swine holds so many to be his wives as he has been able to subject to his lust? ”<sup>2</sup>

Aquitaine.

Besides these sweeping general accusations Salvianus alleges special faults against particular regions. Thus he charges the upper classes of Aquitaine with gross licentiousness in their own households.

Its gross  
licentious-  
ness.

“ Who has rendered faith to his wife? nay, so far as concerns the passivity of lust, who has not reduced his wife to one of a number of slave women, and has not degraded the sacrament of holy wedlock to this, that no woman in his house seems to be of less esteem in the sight of the husband than she who was chief in the dignity of matrimony? . . . For a matron is not far removed from the vileness of slaves when the *paterfamilias* is the husband of the slave women. And who of rich Aquitanians was not this? Whom did the most immodest slave women not call with reason paramour or husband to themselves? ”<sup>3</sup>

Spain.  
The Van-  
dals purer  
than the  
Christians.

He attributes the subjection of Spain by the Vandals to the fact that the Vandals were of purer lives than those whom they subjected. It was by the same, or perhaps by even greater vices than those which stained the rest of Christendom that the Spanish Christians had been overthrown.<sup>4</sup>

Africa.

Against the generality of African Christians Salvianus makes charges no less startling. He says that they compare unfavourably with the barbarian races. The Goths are perfidious, but clean-living; the Alans fail in purity, but are straight; the Franks are liars, but hospitable; the Saxons are fierce and cruel, but admirable in their continence. In fine, if these races have each its own defects, they have also each its own merits.

Impurity  
and  
blasphemy  
prevalent.

“ But with nearly all Africans I know not what fault is absent. If inhumanity is under condemnation, they are inhumane; if drunkenness, they are drunkards; if falseness, they are most false; if trickery, most fraudulent; if covetousness, most covetous; if perfidy, most perfidious. But their impurity and blasphemy should not be mixed up with all these; for those vices of which we have spoken are shared by other races; but these they have captured for their very own.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Lib.* iii. c. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Lib.* iv. c. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Lib.* vii. c. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *C.* 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Lib.* vii. c. 15.



The two prevalent vices of the African province are thus declared to be impurity and blasphemy. Under the former of these heads, impurity, he indicates a variety of appalling offences. He says that you will hardly find a chaste man even in the Church. Under the second head, blasphemy, he makes a charge which is startling, but which will not be without interest for modern missionaries. He asserts that the Christian community largely took part in the worship of the goddess Cœlestis.<sup>1</sup> He says that he is not speaking of those who are avowedly pagans.

Christians  
take part  
in worship  
of Cœlestis.

“For which of those who are called Christians will not adore that Cœlestis either after Christ, or what is much worse, before Christ? Who has not crossed the threshold of the house of GOD when he was filled with the fumes of demoniacal sacrifices, and has not with the reek of the very demons gone up to the altar of Christ in such wise that it would have been a less grave offence not to come to the temple of the Lord than so to come. Because the Christian who does not come to church is guilty of neglect, but he who so comes of sacrilege.”<sup>2</sup>

Such are the charges which Salvianus brings against the Christians of Gaul, Spain, and Africa. Let all possible allowance be made for rhetorical exaggeration; it will still remain true that if the dark pictures drawn by Salvianus could be accepted by the men of his day as in any degree a recognisable presentment, the moral condition of Western Christendom was low indeed.

The other authority to whom reference may be made is Paulinus of Pella. The son of a civil officer, probably a *vicarius*, in Illyricum, he was born at Pella, a small town not far from Thessalonica about A.D. 376. His father was soon afterwards transferred to Carthage as proconsul, and Paulinus was sent to Bordeaux to be brought up in the house of his grandfather. He lived to a great age, and in his eighty-fourth year wrote a poem which he styled *Eucharisticon Deo sub Ephemeridis meæ textu* (c. A.D. 459). The autobiographical notices in this poem are of interest. He describes some features of his life as an adolescent in his grandfather's home in Aquitaine somewhere about the closing years of the fourth century. He takes credit to himself that although he gave way in those days to youthful lust, he observed certain bounds in his indulgence. He restricted himself to the slave women of the household, not having intercourse with free women even when they offered themselves. He was also careful to seek none who were unwilling, or who belonged to another (*juris alieni*). He sought in this way to be guilty rather of a fault (*culpæ*) than of a crime (*criminis*).

Paulinus of  
Pella.

His loose  
conduct  
as an  
adolescent,

The picture thus sketched is startling in its laxity. It will be

<sup>1</sup> According to Tertullian this goddess was regarded as the bestower of rain: “*Ista ipsa virgo Cœlestis pluviarum pollicitatrix.*” (*Apol.*, 23.)

<sup>2</sup> *Lib.* viii. c. 2.

noticed how exactly it corresponds with the account given by Salvianus of the households of well-to-do Christians in Aquitaine.

although  
baptized.

The question at once suggests itself: Had Paulinus been baptized when he thus conducted himself? In the fourth century, while infant baptism was no doubt in use, there were numerous instances of the deferment of Baptism to adult years. The poem does not directly give the answer. But (v. 108) he says: "I know that by Thy indulgence all may be remitted to me from the time when condemning myself as a lapsed person I betook myself to Thy justice."<sup>1</sup> From the *me lapsum* it would appear that he had been baptized in early life. This may also be inferred from the account which he gives (v. 474) of his Penance and restoration to Communion.

He seeks  
Penance.

He narrates how when he realised his offences he had some purpose of embracing a monastic life in spite of all the family ties and obligations which by that time surrounded him, but that "by the counsel of holy men (*consilio sanctorum*)," a phrase which may be understood of the bishop and clergy, he was persuaded "to observe the ancient mode, which once brought in by the tradition of the ancients, our Church, now still preserving, maintained." He thus describes this "ancient mode":—

His con-  
fession,  
and his  
restoration  
at Easter.

"Having, therefore, confessed such matters as I knew to call for repentance, I studied to live by the law placed before me. . . . But afterwards, when now I was forty-five years old, at Easter, the appointed time duly coming round, having returned to Thy sacred altars, O Christ my God, through Thy compassion I with joy received Thy sacrament, now eight and thirty years ago."

It will be noticed here that confession was a leading feature in the penitential course undertaken, and that the time of reconciliation and restoration to communion was in Gaul, as elsewhere in the West, the Easter season.

Relaxation  
of the  
morals of  
Christians.

The general impression left upon the mind by the perusal of the essay of Salvianus and of the poem of Paulinus is that by the fifth century the barriers which should divide the Church from the world were to a great extent obliterated, and that considerable populations bearing the Christian name were in their lives making no serious effort to bear the Christian yoke. Nor is this state of affairs other than might have been expected when the Church had "converted the empire." It was rather the empire which overbore the Church; and the Church has perhaps no greater witness of the Divine support vouchsafed to her than the fact that, in spite of the perversity and riot of that age, she emerged with all the spiritual force of her commission to exercise her powers of reconciling the Christian fallen into sin no less than of regenerating the alien members of the fallen race.

<sup>1</sup> *Ex quo me reprobans lapsum ad tua jura refugi.*



Also an important distinction must be drawn. If the conventional conduct of the unearnest was simply vicious and sinful, and that in no petty degree, the convention was not the accepted discipline of the Church, but only, the tolerance of the like-minded. When, as in the case of Paulinus, conviction of sin found place, the penitent underwent a discipline of which confession at any rate formed part, and was duly reconciled at the Easter season.

This laxity not the accepted discipline of the Church.

Still it is readily intelligible how, with such a body of practice and opinion making for laxity, the tendency to avoid Penance would become increasingly manifest. With some it would take the form of ignoring attempts to exact disabilities in the life following Penance and restoration; by some, as in the case of those rebuked by S. Pacian, all penance except confession itself would be declined; while others again would boldly throw aside all pretence of conforming to external discipline, and would venture to approach the communion as they saw fit. If they did this it does not appear that in ordinary cases they would be restrained. While the penitential system of the Church was existing and in use for those who voluntarily sought it, or for those notorious offenders who were singled out by authority, it may be concluded without much hesitation that from this time onwards the growing tendency of the Christian community generally was to ignore Penance, save for the notable exception of death-bed confessions. The penitential discipline of later days with which modern Christendom is familiar would be evolved not so much by survival as by a sort of renaissance, the course of which will be traced in the later chapters of this inquiry. In the fifth century Penance in time of health was nearly lost in the West as in the East: and it would have to be regained.

Tendency to evade penance,

except for death-bed confessions.

## IX. A REVIEW OF THE PRACTICE OF PEN- ANCE IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH FROM ITS INCEPTION TO A.D. 450

The Church has ever believed in her empowerment to bind and loose.

THE Catholic Church of Jesus Christ has ever believed that her Lord has left her an empowerment to bind and to loose the souls of men, to remit and to retain the sins of which in their rebellion or their waywardness men have rendered themselves guilty. The direct commission is recorded in the Gospel according to S. John as having been given to the Apostles on the evening of the Day of Resurrection, when after breathing on them the Lord said, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost : whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained.*

The human part in the redemption of the human race.

If it be asked what is the part which men can play in the forgiveness of offence against the majesty of God, it may be answered that in the mysterious wisdom of God it would seem that the fallen human race is required to work out its own redemption. Only as a man will the Divine Word Himself become the Redeemer of the race : and when from Calvary and Hades the risen Lord passes to His place at the right hand of the Father, He leaves upon the earth His chosen officers to apply to the sons of men, each in his several need, the great Atonement which He has wrought for them.

Conveyance of the commission.

When the Lord thus breathes upon the Apostles, He is in the traditional acceptance of the Church to be understood as conveying at that point of time the actual commission which He expresses in words. From that point of time His ministers stand commissioned to remit and to retain the sins of their fellow-men.

It covers both Baptism and Penance.

A commission of this solemnity given at the outset of the apostolic ministry is best understood, not as confined to the penitence of fallen Christians of future time, but as covering the need of the whole number of the unreconciled among the children of men. The *whose soever* (*ἅν τινων bis*) of the commission does indeed express this universality of scope. Thus the commission covers in the first place the great sacrament of Holy Baptism, whereby in connexion with the human ministration of the sacrament, the forgiveness of sins is vouchsafed to those who approach



in penitence and faith, and each is made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. The commission must in the second place be taken to cover the case of those who, once reconciled by Baptism, have in after time proved disloyal, and have needed to be reconciled anew. This is the sphere of what in Christian practice is known as Penance, the sacrament or ordinance of grace whereby is conveyed the Divine forgiveness to the penitent Christian.

In this twofold exercise of the same commission, in Baptism and in Penance, there is, as might be expected, much that is parallel. S. Ambrose is but one of various early writers who expressly note that in each case the Divine forgiveness is wrought through human ministrations.<sup>1</sup> In Baptism the scope of human discretion appears to be somewhat less than in Penance. The minister judges of the sufficiency of the faith and penitence of the catechumen, and then in connexion with the ministerial act of Baptism the Holy Spirit forgives and reconciles. In Penance the minister is still called upon to judge of the penitence and perhaps of the faith of the penitent, but his judgment has to be farther exercised in the imposition of penalty, and in the determination of the time of reconciliation and admission to communion. But in each case the minister is human, the grace conveyed Divine.

It will indeed at once occur to the student that in the history of the Church the tendency has been to extend the ministry of Baptism vested in the Apostles not only to the order of priests, but to deacons and lay persons in cases of emergency: whereas the administration of Penance has with comparatively rare exceptions been restricted to the priesthood. Here it is sufficient to observe that in each case the ministry admitted is the human ministry of a Divine grace.

The great sacrament of Holy Baptism is not the subject of the present treatise. And that article of the Nicene Faith which expresses the Catholic belief in one Baptism for the remission of sins need not here be the subject of further attention. It is with Penance that these studies are concerned: that is to say, with the application of the Lord's commission to the Christian who has fallen from the life of grace and needs to be restored.

The exercise of the commission in the practice of Penance shows in history the most extraordinary variations. In the first three centuries there is a keen contention as to whether baptized offenders in any of the three capital sins of apostasy, impurity, and bloodshed are or are not admissible to reconciliation in this present life. Hermas (? A.D. 100) indicates that on this point there were already in his time at least two strains of teaching. Some teachers regarded Baptism as the only opportunity of

These compared.

The present studies concerned with Penance.

Variations in the practice of Penance.

<sup>1</sup> e. g. S. Athanasius. Fragment as cited above; and S. Cyril of Alexandria, *Com. on S. John* (*in loco*).

forgiveness for such mortal offences : while others took the view that forgiveness for such offences was readily open even after Baptism. It would seem that a similar tendency to divergence of outlook may be found in the New Testament. The stricter line appears to be taken in the Epistle to the Hebrews : while more lenient practice can be discerned in S. Paul and in S. John. Hermas, while sympathising theoretically with the stricter view, announces a revelation of present mercy to all offending Christians who will repent before a limiting day,<sup>1</sup> a mercy having reference to an imminent persecution and to the approaching end of the age. All the greater writers of the second and early third centuries are found on the side of rigorism. This is the case with Clement of Alexandria, who, however, follows Hermas in mercy to a penitent adulteress : it is no less the case with Hippolytus, with Tertullian, and with Origen. On the other hand, there are bishops of this period who are conspicuous in their advocacy of a more lenient attitude. Such were Dionysius of Corinth ; and notably Callistus, who was bishop of Rome from A.D. 218 to A.D. 223. It was to the courageous initiative of Callistus that was due about the year A.D. 220 the revolution of practice at Rome which admitted the reconciliation of the adulterer, and which in the event will be found to have determined the attitude of the Christian Church in this matter for all future time. The next important revolution of practice occurred after the Decian persecution (A.D. 250) ; and may be connected with the name of Cyprian, the great bishop of Carthage. Could an apostate hope to find reconciliation on this side the grave ? In the century preceding the Decian persecution the Church had in effect barred to the apostate all hope of reconciliation upon earth. After the Decian persecution the bar was removed, and amid considerable variations of penitential practice, the apostate was recognised as admissible to communion at least when death was in view. In the matter of homicide it is not possible to indicate with equal precision when offenders were first reconciled : but the Council of Ancyra, which met in A.D. 314, is found making provision for the reconciliation of homicides after due penance accomplished. In the progress of this movement towards greater leniency the advance was not made in all the provinces of the Church with the same rapidity. Among those provinces Spain was the most belated in the exercise of these great concessions : and the Council of Illiberris, which may be assigned to A.D. 306, is still found exhibiting the rigorism which had characterised the rest of the Church prior to the Decian persecutions. But in the twenty years which followed it became true of the entire Catholic Church that the old rigorism which forbade the reconciliation of the graver offenders in this life was for ever put aside : and the great Nicene council summed up the result thus attained in a

<sup>1</sup> Except the worst apostates.



canon which has received too little notice, a canon which enacted that every sort of offence should find the door of reconciliation open to the penitent offender when death was at last in sight. Since the Nicene council the Catholic Church of Christ has in her long history known no other teaching.

The outlook of the earliest Christian centuries in this matter of the capital sins of baptized persons is so entirely foreign to the mind of the modern Church that it seldom finds appreciation. To the earliest Christians the extension of pardon in this life to scandalous members of the Christian body was hardly a matter of primary concern, even if it could be contemplated at all. The offenders in common with others had had their share in the mercies of the Lord when they were baptized: and they might seek them again at the last great day. Meanwhile there was no great harm done in leaving the offenders alone: and severe exclusion might indeed prove to be the truest kindness to themselves. An important, and for a long time prevailing, section of the Christian community went farther than this. It was contended that the three capital sins of apostasy, impurity, and bloodshed were reserved for the Divine tribunal: and that it was temerarious and impious for man to assume to admit such persons to the reconciliation of the Church in this present life. Thus the commission to loose tended to be shut down to a class of sins which may be styled intermediate or moderate; reaching neither the capital sins which were *irremissible* or *incurable*, nor the more venial sins for which formal Penance was not required. At the same time the commission to bind was claimed and exercised in the fullest measure. The Church was safeguarded against the unworthy by the rigorous exclusion of such persons for the whole term of life. In the presence of the heathen she must stand ever purged. If she kept herself undefiled she might look for the approval of her Lord.

Attitude  
of the  
earliest  
Christians  
towards  
grave sins  
of the  
baptized.

Consequent  
restriction  
of abso-  
lution.

Meanwhile the Church had been building up a definite and formal procedure of Penance for all those whom she saw fit to admit at all to the penitential status. It is clear from S. Paul's epistles to the Corinthians that considerable circumstance was employed in the exercise of his authority whether in retaining or in remitting, in binding or in loosing. But it may be inferred from a study of the *Shepherd* of Hermas that at the end of the first century there was not yet in force as the accepted practice of the Church any of the elaborate machinery of exomologesis which at the close of the second century is found described in the writings of Tertullian. During the second century this procedure of penance appears to have gradually developed. It is possible to trace features of it in the various indications of penance which the century affords; in the exomologesis of Cerdon, in the experiences of Marcion, in the exomologesis of the women who had followed Marcus the Gnostic alike in Asia

Procedure  
of Penance,

in its be-  
ginnings,

in Tertul-  
lian,

Minor and in the Rhone district, and in the penance of Natalius. In the penance which Natalius performed at Rome about the year A.D. 200 the procedure comprised (1) sackcloth and ashes, (2) prostration before the bishop, (3) rolling beneath the feet of the faithful, (4) tears and entreaties. It is, however, in the *De Pœnitentia* of Tertullian (c. A.D. 198) that the fullest description of the penitential procedure is to be found. Tertullian certainly witnesses to the African practice; and almost certainly also to the practice of Rome. The Greek word *exomologesis* is now employed as a technical term in the Latin churches to indicate the outward procedure of Penance: and it comprises (1) sackcloth and ashes, (2) fasting, (3) lamentation, (4) prostration before the presbyters, and (5) kneeling before the faithful. It is not clear whether the confession in words particularising the offence committed was made before the whole congregation or only before the priest or bishop who assigned the penance: but the whole subsequent evidence of Church practice goes to show that the verbal particularisation of offence before the congregation at no time formed part of the *exomologesis* which was required by the Church.

in S.  
Cyprian,

The writings of S. Cyprian afford considerable insight into the procedure of Penance in the church of Carthage at a date some fifty years later than the *De Pœnitentia* of Tertullian. The procedure is seen to be part of the normal practice of the church. It is referred to under such names as *ordo*, *ordo disciplinæ*, *disciplina Domini*. It is only exercised in the case of minor sins (*in minoribus peccatis*): but in the time of Cyprian the sins of impurity appear to be so far classed among these that they can be admitted to Penance. The procedure comprises (a) *pœnitentia*, (b) *exomologesis*, and (c) imposition of the hands of the bishop and clergy for reconciliation. Of these *pœnitentia* appears to indicate the status of the penitent which gave him a recognised place in the Church, while it required from him the performance of acts of penance for a set term (*justo tempore*), a term presumably set by the bishop to whom in the first place confession of offence was made. It appears that such confession was made even by persons who without outward offence of act had reason to be oppressed by the consciousness of grave sins of thought. The *exomologesis* was almost certainly identical in general character with the *exomologesis* described by Tertullian. It was an ordered course of public humiliation. The reconciliation was effected solemnly by the imposition of the hands of the bishop, in which at Carthage other clergy had a share. The reconciliation carried with it the right of communion (*jus communicationis*). In the case of sick persons the bishop's presence was dispensed with, and the priest, or even on occasion a deacon, would administer the reconciliation of the Church. The procedure in such cases appears to have



comprised some acknowledgment] of offence with the admission of the person to the status of a penitent; possibly also some features of the public exomologesis; and the reconciliation of the person by the imposition of hands. His admission to communion followed.

The two main authorities for the existence of this procedure of Penance in the West as a normal part of the working of the Church in the period between A.D. 150 and A.D. 250 are thus Tertullian and Cyprian, who were both members of the church of Carthage. But the way in which both these writers make their references when writing for Roman readers implies that these observances were not merely local, but were understood at Rome: and the notice of the penance of Natalius at Rome is evidence of the same.

There is some early evidence of penitential procedure in the East. Origen distinguishes sins into three classes. The worst in Origen are *incurable*, and man may not assume to absolve them. The least important are those minor offences which men commit against one another, and which they can forgive one another. In the third or intermediate class are sins which can be remitted by the ministry of spiritual men. It is these intermediate sins and only these which come within the scope of Church Penance. This Penance is characterised (*a*) by the showing of the sin to the priest of the Lord, and the receiving from him the remedy, with (*b*) the penitential exercise of tears and lamentation, of fasting and abstinence. This early use of confession to the priest may be compared with the confession to the bishop mentioned by Cyprian. In each case it forms part of recognised and ordinary usage: and in each case it is private confession to one person, and not to the whole congregation. In citing these instances of confession as the preliminary of Penance it is important to bear in mind that there was no thought of admitting Penance more than once in the whole term of life.

In the twenty years following the Decian persecution (A.D. 252–270) the procedure of Penance received in the provinces of the Asian peninsula an interesting and remarkable development. The great missionary bishop S. Gregory the Wonderworker of Neo-Cæsarea in Pontus put in operation in his diocese a system of graded penance. By this system the exomologesis of earlier times was broken up into grades through which, or through some of which, the penitent was required to pass successively. The grades are usually enumerated as five in number; the Mourners, the Hearers, the Fallers, the Bystanders, and the Restored or Faithful. Of these five grades, however, two are not properly grades of penitents at all. The Mourners are supplicants for Penance, whose supplication has not yet brought them admission to the status of the penitent: they are altogether outside the

The graded system of the Asian provinces.

Church. Again, the last grade consists of those whose Penance is now past and done : they take their place among the Faithful. The grades which are, in fact, grades of penitents are the three grades of Hearers, Fallers, and Bystanders. The distinction of Hearers and Fallers may have already been in use for catechumens : and the provision thus made for catechumens is now utilised for penitents. The grade of Bystanders seems to have arisen to meet the circumstances of advanced penitents, as there is no record that it was ever in use for any other class of persons.

It is  
grouped  
about the  
Liturgy.

In this graded system the procedure of public penance is seen to group itself in its various stages about the public solemnisation of the Eucharist, the liturgical service of the Church. The Mourners are outsiders, having no place in the Christian Church, no admitted presence at any stage of the Liturgy. Their place is outside the outer portal. The Hearers stand in the narthex, the Fallers kneel in the nave : but it is only for the duration of that prior part of the Liturgy to which catechumens are admitted, in Latin phrase the *missa catechumenorum*. The Bystanders may remain throughout the service, but they may not communicate. Lastly come the now Faithful Christians, who communicate.

The system of graded penance, thus introduced in Pontus, appears to have spread rapidly to the neighbouring provinces of Cappadocia and Galatia. The Council of Ancyra in Galatia, which was held in A.D. 314, alludes to the grades as "the defined grades." The system is an accepted system : and is acquiring a technical terminology. The length of the penance in the several grades is not by S. Gregory indicated with any precision. In the fourth century the terms of penance come to be exactly indicated.

The church  
of the  
*Didascalia*  
*Apostolorum*.

The treatise known as the *Didascalia Apostolorum* may be ascribed to about the same period as that which witnessed the activity of S. Gregory the Wonderworker in Pontus, that is to say, to the years between A.D. 252 and A.D. 270. It gives considerable insight into the penitential usage of the country churches of Syria.

The bishop is shown as supreme over his flock, with a Divinely given commission. The prerogative of binding and loosing forms part of that commission. It is the bishop who casts out : it is the bishop who reconciles. He casts out the disobedient : and even the willing penitent must submit to be cast out as the first stage of the penitential procedure. There is accordingly for the penitent in the first place a formal expulsion from the church building. Without this justice is not satisfied. But this done, there comes next the place of mercy. In the exercise of mercy the bishop must expect opposition. The attitude of the *Didascalia* is the newer attitude of compassion to the penitent sinner which became general in the Church after A.D. 252 : but in the congregation are found many representatives of the rigorism



which had previously prevailed. The bishop must overrule them. After the casting out of the offender the procedure first shows the faithful as leaving the offender outside while they go into the church to make supplication for him. Next the bishop commands him to be brought in. The bishop then formally questions him before the church as to his penitence. If he find him worthy to be received into the Church, that is as a penitent, he now assigns him a suitable penance. It is noteworthy that there are no long terms. The bishop is to "appoint him days of fasting according to his fault, two or three or five or seven weeks." Suitable reproof and exhortation are to be given. When the penance has been performed, the reconciliation of the offender may follow. It is apparently in connexion with the solemnity of reconciliation that four points or moments are indicated as follows: (1) the penitent expresses his penitence by weeping; (2) the faithful pray for him; (3) the bishop lays his hands upon him; (4) and he is henceforth allowed "to be in the Church."

As regards grades of penitents it would appear that while in the church of the *Didascalia* the penitents are clearly differentiated from the excluded, and no less so from the faithful, there are among the penitents themselves no formal gradations. Till they are reconciled they leave with the catechumens: when they are reconciled they remain for the Prayer and for Communion.

The early years of the fourth century have some interesting indications of the development of penitential discipline. In the city of Rome in the days of the bishops Marcellus and Eusebius (A.D. 307-309) there was a serious conflict of parties which resulted in riot and bloodshed. The pontiffs insisted on the requirement of penance in the case of the lapsed; and were opposed in this by a party of laxity. In the Spanish peninsula the Council of Iliberris (c. A.D. 306), as already noticed, shows the Spanish churches still solid for the pre-Decian rigorism fifty years after the rest of the Church had moved: but the Council of Arles (A.D. 314) some eight years later is on the side of the measure of indulgence now generally conceded, and among its signatories are found representatives of the Spanish churches. At about the same date (A.D. 306) Peter, archbishop of Alexandria, in his *Canonical Epistle* admits to penance those who had lapsed. He distinguishes the measures of their fault. To those who had lapsed under torments he assigns forty days of penance. To those whose lapse had occurred in time of imprisonment a year is given. To those who had failed in sheer cowardice three or four years are assigned. Thus the punishments are real and definite in duration: but they are not excessive.

In the East the councils of Ancyra (A.D. 314) and Neo-Cæsarea in Cappadocia (c. A.D. 320) show the graded system firmly established in the Asian provinces. That system is also accepted as in force by the canons of the General Council of Nicæa (A.D. 325);

Penitential  
discipline  
in the  
fourth  
century.  
Rome.

Spain.

Alexandria.

The East.

an acceptance not a little remarkable in face of the historical fact that the graded system failed to establish itself at any time outside the Asian limits. Locally Nicæa was in the province of Bithynia, where the system was doubtless in force. Reference has already been made to the important thirteenth canon of the Council of Nicæa. It is to be noted as registering for the universal Church the position now everywhere attained with regard to the reconciliation of capital offenders. "If any be passing" he is not "to be deprived of the last and most necessary Viaticum."

Influence  
of the  
conversion  
of the  
empire.

Of the utmost importance in the history of penitential procedure is the far-reaching event which is generally known as the conversion of the empire. As might be supposed, the vast influx of persons into the ranks of the baptized which then occurred was far from being an unmixed benefit for the Church of Christ. Of the new converts thousands were actuated by very mixed motives: and even among the less faulty large numbers were found to be of no great earnestness. The inevitable result was the loosening of the bonds of Christian discipline. In the great centres of population this loosening discipline tended to be more complete than in the remoter districts where events moved less rapidly. In the provincial dioceses of the Asian peninsula it was still possible for many years to retain a Church discipline of much severity; while in contrast the great cities of Antioch and Constantinople are found throwing off the ancient discipline and exhibiting a freedom or licence of habit hitherto unknown in the Church of Christ. So remarkably various are the developments of Penance in the different parts of the Church in the fourth century that any useful survey must discriminate accurately the practice of the various churches.

Long  
terms of  
penance  
in the  
Asian  
provinces.

It has been said that the churches of the Asian peninsula maintained a severe discipline. The system of graded penance introduced into Pontus by Gregory the Wonderworker had spread over a great part of the Asian provinces: and the severe discipline which had been adopted became still more severe when in the fourth century the period of penance in each grade had acquired a fixed term of continuance often of great length. Thus persons guilty of certain grave sins of impurity were by the Council of Ancyra (A.D. 314) required to remain among the penitents for thirty years. The *Canonical Epistles* of S. Basil (A.D. 374-375) supply a list of these graded penances with the terms of continuance which could be accepted in his day. These are startling in their severity: and it is a relief to be reminded by Zonaras that the discretion of the bishop was always present to temper their incidence.

The thirty-fourth canon of S. Basil throws light upon one feature of the penitential procedure of the Asian provinces which is of great interest. Women guilty of adultery "who confess through piety, or howsoever they may be convicted," are not to



be exposed in the procedure of penance "lest by proving their guilt we should afford a ground of death." They are to take their place among the Bystanders till their penance is fulfilled. Persons drawing inferences as to the sin from the character of the penalty would suspect no very grave offence. It is clear from this provision that in the case of those adulteresses who made voluntary confession such confession was not a confession in word before the congregation: and it is also clear that no comment was expected because a public confession was not made. It is reasonable to infer that the confessions were made privately; and that private confession was the accustomed use. It has been seen that private confession to a bishop or priest is indicated both by S. Cyprian and by Origen as employed in the preceding century.

Confessions  
were  
private.

S. Gregory of Nyssa in Cappadocia Prima, whose episcopate chiefly falls in the last quarter of the fourth century, expressly refers to confessions made to a priest. He makes provision for the penance and reconciliation of a person guilty of secret theft "if by confession he has shown his transgression to the priest." Nyssa was but ten miles from Cæsarea. It will be reasonable to expect that for sins of some magnitude confession to a priest was possible and practised in the churches of the Asian provinces generally.

The evidence which has been cited is sufficient to show that a stringent discipline remained the rule in the Asian provinces throughout the fourth century. Very different conditions prevailed in the neighbouring province of Syria, and notably in its capital city, the populous and facile Antioch. The voluminous writings of S. Chrysostom afford considerable insight into the conditions of the church of Antioch at a time when the great influx from the world into the Church had been in course a generation. One hundred thousand persons in Antioch, being one half the population, were Christians. It is clear from the writings of S. Chrysostom that the graded system of Penance found no place in this community: and his utterances show no great sympathy with any public course of exomologesis. Exposure in a "theatre of fellow-servants" is an "intolerable publication." S. Chrysostom is also insistent that the value of penance is to be judged not by its time, but by its temper. "Five days" of real penance will intercept a multitude of sins. Nor is efficient penance confined to one mode of exercise. There are many modes, and they all reach up to heaven. Such are (1) confession, (2) contrition, (3) humility, (4) almsgiving, (5) prayer, and (6) forgiveness of others. Origen had indicated a variety of modes of penance: but none of these save martyrdom had with Origen been available for the baptized person guilty of capital offence. With Chrysostom no capital sin lies outside the present mercy of the Lord thus variously exercised within His Church

No such  
strictness  
at Antioch.

S. Chrysos-  
tom.

Various  
modes of  
penance.

on earth. Nor is it once only that this mercy may be exercised. The practice of the Church, clinging to the rule of Hermas, had hitherto admitted only one Penance in the lifetime. The teaching of Chrysostom, which became the subject of attack after his removal to Constantinople, found for the relapsing sinner a place of recurring mercy, with no recognised limitation but that of need.

At the same time Chrysostom holds a high view of the priestly prerogative; and of the place of the priest in conveying forgiveness to the sinner. It may well be that priests exercised their office not less at Antioch than the priest penitentiary was exercising it at Constantinople. And it is remarkable that S. Chrysostom in after days at Constantinople expressly approved of "intimate" or private recourse to a priest as one mode of Penance even after the priest penitentiary had been abolished.

On the whole, however, it is clear that S. Chrysostom is by comparison with earlier teachers, or with the contemporary use of the Asian churches, a very relaxed disciplinarian. The control of the discipline of Penance is no longer effectively wielded by the Church so far as concerns the mass of the Christian people. And this situation Chrysostom, in fact, accepts and justifies. Especially by his teaching of the many modes of remission does he retire from all claim on the part of the Church to control the exercise of such remission. There are cases in which recourse to the priest may advantageously be admitted: and there are classes of offenders, who, at least while they are offenders, should be excluded from communion if they are known. Beyond this the penitential discipline of the church of Antioch hardly goes. The ordinary Christian is advised to adopt some mode of penitence if he needs it. The conditions of Antiochene Christianity at the close of the fourth century are, in fact, strangely like the modern conditions familiar to ourselves.

Constantinople. No severity of discipline.

The priest penitentiary.

A study of the conditions of the church of the city of Constantinople points to the prevalence of a liberty or licence not greatly unlike that which has been found to prevail at Antioch. It would appear, indeed, that from the inauguration of the new capital in A.D. 330 a priest penitentiary had held and exercised his office in the Constantinopolitan church. The office was not a new office: nor was it confined to Constantinople. It is stated by Socrates that after the Decian persecution priests penitentiary had been very generally appointed. The priest penitentiary of Constantinople, so far from being the chief type and exemplar of his office, had only been appointed to reproduce the system of neighbouring churches, when some eighty years after the Decian persecution the city of Constantinople was called into being. The evidence goes to show that the office as exercised at Constantinople at the end of the fourth century was little more than a survival. While it is clear that the ministrations of the penitentiary were



sought by some ; it is stated by Sozomen that the ancient solemnity and severity of the penitential practice had gradually given way to conditions of indifference and carelessness. The same may be fairly inferred from the fact that Nectarius could abolish the office in A.D. 391 without incurring any opposition.

The glimpses obtained of the office of priest penitentiary and of its exercise are notwithstanding of high value for the history of penitential procedure. The first feature to be noted is that the penitentiary is a priest and not a bishop, and that as a priest he not only heard confessions and assigned penances, but admitted to reconciliation ; and all this in the ordinary course, and not merely, as in the church of S. Cyprian, when the bishop was absent, and the need imperative. More will be said later on the subject of the ministers of Penance.

The story of the lady whose sin and whose Penance are variously recorded by the historians Socrates and Sozomen shows the penitent making a confession privately to the priest, and making it *κατὰ μέρος, particularly, in several detail*, very much, in fact, as a modern confession. It shows the priest assigning a penance which is not to be publicly performed in the congregation, but which consists of fasting and prayer, exercises which can be undertaken by the penitent without incurring observation. There is no assignment of any grade of penance, and no indication of the graded system. It may be the case that the penitent was expected to perform her penance within the church precincts. It appears to be understood that when the penance was fulfilled absolution would be accorded.

The story of the lady and the penitentiary.

It will be noted that the private character of the penance assigned by the priest penitentiary is a novel feature. The private confession was nothing new. Private confession is indicated as in use by S. Cyprian, by Origen, by the provisions of S. Basil for the adulteress, by those of S. Gregory of Nyssa for the thief. But in all these cases the penance, the exomologesis, has been a public experience. In the system of the priest penitentiary the public exomologesis has passed away. The explanation appears to be that after the Decian persecution it was found desirable to reconcile the lapsed with as little publicity as might be. The priest penitentiary was, in fact, called into being at least partly for the very purpose of evading publicity.

A private penance assigned.

It appears to be fairly clear that in the Eastern churches which employed a priest penitentiary the reconciliation or absolution was as little public as the confession or the penance. There is no mention of a public ceremony or of the interposition of the bishop at any point. At Rome and in the Western churches generally this was not so. However unobtrusive the preliminaries the reconciliation was in the West a public solemnity of which the bishop was the ministrant.

The reconciliation also private.

General  
suppres-  
sion of  
priests  
peniten-  
tiary;

but other  
priests  
ministered  
Penance.

After the action of Nectarius in suppressing the office of priest penitentiary in A.D. 391 the bishops of various neighbouring churches followed his example. The reason was probably the same in all cases, that the office had become a mere survival, and that while a few persons might avail themselves of it, the Christian population generally stood outside it. Thus the interesting office of priest penitentiary passes from history. But it would be a mistake to conclude that henceforth in these various Eastern churches sinners might no longer confess their sins to a priest, or seek absolution from him. The successor of Nectarius in the patriarchate of Constantinople was S. Chrysostom, and S. Chrysostom in his *Homilies on the Hebrews* which he preached at Constantinople some ten years after the action of Nectarius specifies intimate or private recourse to the priest as one of nine modes of penitence open to the offender. In indicating this recourse to the priest S. Chrysostom calls attention to the forgiveness of sins which is connected with his ministry. It is important to note that such ministrations are not confined to a priest penitentiary, but appear to be contemplated as obtainable from any priest.

In this review the Eastern churches at the close of the fourth century are seen to exhibit a remarkable variety of practice. The Asian churches continue to employ a discipline of startling severity: the churches of Antioch and of Constantinople show a fulness of relaxation hardly less startling. In Rome and in the Western churches generally it will be found that a measure of discipline is retained. Also the practice of the Western churches will be found far more uniform than is the case in the East.

Rome.

The priests  
hear of the  
titles.

These  
hear con-  
fessions  
and assign  
penances.

The bishop  
reconciles  
at a public  
function.

For the practice of Rome the authorities which have been cited are S. Jerome, S. Innocent, S. Leo, the historian Sozomen, and the Gelasian Sacramentary. From these sources the main features of the Roman procedure of Penance can be reconstructed. From the days of Marcellus there have been twenty-five priests of the *titles* of the city: and the functions of these twenty-five priests have included the administration of Penance. They have had much in common with the priest penitentiary of an Eastern church: but at Rome the reconciliation which precedes communion is accorded by the bishop at a public solemnity. The priest has heard the confession of the offender; he has admitted him to the status of the penitent; he has assigned him his penance, which includes both private exercises and public humiliations; he has indicated the length of time during which these penitential exercises shall continue, and the point at which the penitent shall be discharged. It is, however, the bishop who on the Thursday before Easter gives effect to the judgment of the priest, and reconciles the penitent in a public function of much solemnity.



The public exercises of the ancient exomologesis are at least in part retained. The penance of Fabiola shows her clad in sack-cloth and taking her place in an "order of penitents" (*in ordine pœnitentium*) with "dishevelled hair, a wan face, soiled hands, and a fouled neck." The sides of her dress are unfastened; her head is uncovered. All ornaments are put aside. She sits "separated with Miriam the sister of Moses." "She does not enter the church of the Lord." The description of Sozomen shows the penitents with wailing and lamentation casting themselves prostrate on the ground. The rubric of the Gelasian Sacramentary similarly directs that the penitent is to come forth from the place where he has done penance, and to be presented in the bosom of the Church, "his whole body prostrate on the ground."

Public  
exomolo-  
gesis re-  
tained.

This public penitence of the offender is in the Roman church to be met by sympathetic action on the part of the bishop, of the clergy, and of the whole congregation. In the case of Fabiola "the bishop, the presbyters, and all the people" are "weeping with her." In Sozomen's account "the whole multitude of the church with loud crying are suffused in tears." All lie prostrate in sympathy. The bishop "first arises and raises the prostrate ones." This is not on the occasion of the absolution, but during the course of the penance. The congregation thus in sympathetic penitence is described in the Gelasian Sacramentary as the "groaning church."

The  
"groaning  
church."

There are various public prayers on behalf of the penitents. In Sozomen's account the bishop prays on their behalf "in such sort as is fitting." At what point in the Roman practice the penitents leave the church is not clear. Their departure may be expected at the close of the *missa catechumenorum*: but it is possible that at Rome they were permitted to remain throughout the Liturgy.

To the public exercises of penance it is the practice to add other private exercises. Such were fasting and privation of the bath.

Private  
exercises  
of penance.

At last came the day of solemn reconciliation. All penitents, as would appear, who since the preceding Easter had been admitted to Penance, and had now in each case satisfied the requirements of the priest who administered the Penance, were on the Thursday before Easter collected in one place. It was in the basilica of the Lateran that Fabiola was reconciled. The bishop in person in the presence of a congregation gathered from the various *titles* of the city effects the solemn reconciliation of the penitents. It is possible that his absolution was conveyed or symbolised by a solemn laying on of hands. It was certainly by a laying on of hands that heretics were reconciled at Rome. But the laying on of hands is not mentioned in the existing accounts of the solemn reconciliation before Easter. The verbal expression of the absolution is presumably to be found in the prayers which the bishop

The  
solemn  
reconcilia-  
tion.

employs. It is understood that after the reconciliation the penitent is free to make his Easter communion.

There are two features of the relations of the sinner with the priest at the outset of his penitence which should be noted. They are (1) the privacy of the confession, and (2) the admission of the person to the status of penitent.

Confession  
private.

At Rome the confession was certainly private. It would be the first event of the penitential exercises. Not till it had been made could the priest decide to admit the person as a penitent, or could he determine the character and duration of the penance. But the confession was made to the priest alone. The severe condemnation expressed by S. Leo for the exceptional local practice of public confession which had sprung up in Campania and Samnium has been noticed. He describes the normal practice as "the accusation of conscience to the priests alone in secret confession."

Admission  
to status  
of penitent.

After hearing the confession the priest had to exercise the office of judge. For this S. Innocent exhorts him to "give attention to the confession," and to the tokens of its sincerity. If he is satisfied he admits the offender to the status of the penitent and assigns to him a penance for a determinate time. More need not here be said about the penance, but the admission to the status of penitent must not be overlooked. The person was now in an entirely different position from that in which he stood before. He was then, if a mortal offender, an outcast from the Christian fold. On admission as a penitent he is recognised by the Christian fellowship as an erring brother, who in the progress of his penitence will in due course find full restoration to the rank of the faithful. It is important to grasp this distinction. In the long-continued usage of the Church the conferring of the status of penitence which throughout the West is known by the technical phrase *dare pœnitentiam* will be found to hold a prominent place. For centuries various forms of service for such admission, usually styled *Ordo ad dandam pœnitentiam* will be found provided. In the beginnings the admission to penitence may have been much less formal. The importance of the status may be illustrated from the African Canon 76 of the *Statuta Ecclesiæ Antiqua*. A person who is delirious or has lost the power of speech, may be admitted to the status of a penitent if those present testify that he asked for it while he was able. If he is admitted to penitence, then if death is imminent he may be at once reconciled by the imposition of the priest's hands, and the Eucharist may be poured into his mouth. If he has not sought the status of a penitent while he was able, he is not admitted to it : and not being admitted to it he cannot be reconciled.

These  
features  
recur  
throughout  
the West.

The procedure which was employed at Rome will be found to recur in its main features throughout the West; in the provinces of Italy, in Africa, in Spain, in Gaul. Everywhere it is the bishop who reconciles at a public function; and only the bishop, except



in the case of the gravely sick. At Milan this public reconciliation takes place on Good Friday : in Africa some time in Lent. In Africa it is effected by the laying on of the bishop's hands in front of the apse of the church. Everywhere so far as appears the confession of the penitent is private. In Africa Augustine says that they who are seen doing public penance must have committed some grave offence. More is not known. Everywhere penance is marked by outward tokens of affliction as sackcloth and the like. Everywhere the penitent has his place apart in an array of penitents during the solemnisation of the Liturgy. There are in the West no grades of penitents. All penitents in the West resemble most the Fallers of the graded system.

Nowhere in the West can the status of the penitent be twice assumed in the course of a human life. The iteration of penitence is declared to be barred by Siricius at Rome, by Ambrose at Milan, and by Augustine and Macedonius in Africa, while in Spain such iteration will be forbidden by the Third Council of Toledo as late as A.D. 589. This is remarkable when it is viewed in contrast with the ready facility of Chrysostom.

Important in its bearing on the future history of Penance in the West is the procedure in the case of persons in grave sickness. For these and these only except under persecution reconciliation by the priest takes the place of reconciliation by the bishop. The priest is called in; he hears the confession if the person is able to make it; and in any case judges if the person is honestly desirous of the status of a penitent. He accords this status (*dat pœnitentiam*) and proceeds to reconciliation as urgency demands; in some districts laying on his hands for such reconciliation, in others not : and finally he administers to the penitent the Viaticum. In this death-bed reconciliation there is commonly no opportunity for the performance by the person of acts of penance. Nor does the situation admit of publicity before the Church. Thus a death-bed penitent escaped the exercise of acts of penance; and secured what was in fact the privilege of private reconciliation by a priest in the place of public reconciliation by the bishop. Considerable hesitation was expressed in the Church as to the value of such death-bed reconciliations. S. Augustine distinguishes between various classes of these penitents. In southern Gaul there was a tendency to refuse reconciliation in sickness to those who had not sought it in health. S. Celestine addresses a reproachful remonstrance on the subject to the bishops of Vienne and Narbonne. Later on the controversy in southern Gaul on death-bed penitence became acute. The utterances of Faustus of Reii and of S. Cæsarius of Arles will be considered in their place.

It would appear that at the close of the period under review (A.D. 450), while voluntary confessions in time of health tended to be few, and penances imposed by authority were confined to notorious public offences, the penitence of the dying was in the

In the West no iteration of Penance.

Penance in sickness

This is administered throughout by the priest.

Value of death-bed Penance variously estimated.

General use of death-bed penance.

West coming more and more into general use. This was a condition of affairs of great detriment to the Church of Christ. It meant that since Penance was only admitted once, persons who had committed mortal sin would remain all their lives unreconciled and without communion with the intention of availing themselves of the one reconciliation by Penance when the last hours came. In the actual practice of the Church that sort of Penance was becoming most familiar which was administered at death: that is to say, a Penance in which not only the confession was private, but the acts of public penance were excused, and the reconciliation privately accorded by a priest.

Penance  
now ad-  
mitted  
for the  
three  
capital  
sins,

It has been seen that in the second century the rigorist leaders of the time excluded from the reconciliation of the Church those persons who had offended in any of the capital sins of impurity, apostasy, and bloodshed. Impurity was brought within the scope of the Church's action by Callistus; the apostate was similarly admitted to reconciliation after the Decian persecution; and the homicide also is found obtaining reconciliation after the close of the third century. The Nicene council ratified this accordance of reconciliation to all classes of sinners before the persons passed away in death. During the time of rigorism the Penance of the Church was employed in dealing with persons who had committed sins of some gravity, but of a gravity short of the capital character.

and hardly  
rendered  
for any-  
thing else.

It is interesting to note the contrast of the attitude of the Church at the close of the fourth century with the attitude taken at the close of the second century. In Spain S. Pacian of Barcelona, whose death may be assigned to A.D. 391, is found formulating a judgment that public penance was required for the three capital sins of fornication, idolatry, and bloodshed; and for no other sins whatsoever. In Africa S. Augustine in the *De Fide et Operibus*, written eight years after the death of S. Pacian, refers to this opinion that penance was only needed for the three capital sins as an opinion current in his time: but he withholds his own judgment in the matter.

Disabilities  
following  
Penance.

A remarkable accompaniment of penitential discipline in the West was the imposition upon penitents even when reconciled of grave disabilities extending over the whole term of life. These are first prominently mentioned in a letter of Siricius, bishop of Rome from A.D. 384 to A.D. 398. No person who has been a penitent may marry: and if already married he may not resume the cohabitation of marriage. No such person may undertake military service; or engage in trade; or attend the games of the circus. S. Leo records and seeks to justify the same disabilities, which clearly had force at Rome. How far they obtained observance in the Western lands generally does not very clearly appear. It is obvious that where such disabilities were enforced or expected the practice of Penance would become doubly repellent to the



sinner; and that the custom of deferring Penance till the closing hours of life would be likely to receive considerable impetus from such extreme severity. Nor is it the case that these striking restrictions mark a period in which the moral tone of the Christian community stood unusually high. On the contrary the testimony of such writers as Salvianus of Marseilles and Paulinus of Pella shows that in the first half of the fifth century the nominally Christian populations of the Western lands exhibited too generally an appalling absence of moral restraint.

The *Ministry* of Penance in the first four and a half centuries of Christianity may next be considered. The commission imparted by our Lord on the day of His Resurrection may be understood as certainly conveyed to the ten Apostles present. It is uncertain whether other persons were present or not. The one person whose absence is noted in the Gospel according to S. John is "Thomas, one of the twelve." The question has been asked: Did our Lord convey His commission to the Apostolic Order, or to the Church? It is of moment in replying to this question to remember that the Church did not then exist in the sense in which it came to exist on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended on the assembled believers and embodied them into corporate life by His own indwelling as the Spirit of the Christ. But the Apostolic Order had existed as a separate order from the time of the Lord's distinguishing call. On the occasion of that call the Lord "appointed twelve that they might be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have authority to cast out devils." They had been promised a special reward—"in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." In one sense the twelve were a complete order: and the default of Judas needed to be supplied by the appointment of one person. It was, in fact, supplied by the appointment of Matthias, as being "the one whom Thou hast chosen." In the subsequent time the Apostolic office was not confined to a college of twelve persons. S. Paul and S. Barnabas are prominent examples of the extended Apostolate. And the later extension of office to diocesan bishops has been commonly regarded in the Catholic Church as carrying all those features of Apostolic function which were permanently required.

It may be fairly said that the Christian tradition of all the ages has in great predominance regarded the commission of our Lord as conveyed to the Apostolic Order. If this commission, a commission to bind and to loose, to remit and to retain, is understood as empowering the Order of Apostles to direct and control the whole procedure whereby the Atonement of the Christ is applied to individual souls, it covers alike Baptism and Penance. By each of these ordinances souls are brought from death into life. How did the Apostles, in fact, direct their operation?

The  
Ministry of  
Penance.  
The Lord's  
commis-  
sion

conveyed  
to the  
Apostolic  
Order.

The  
Apostles  
create an  
ordered  
ministry.

In the narrative of the *Acts* the Apostles are shown as calling into being various orders of ministry by whose ministrations departments of their own functions were to be exercised. They evidently regarded this creation of an ordered ministry as inherent in the powers with which they had been endowed. Not only were they prepared when required to continue the fulness of their office by the ordination of Apostles or bishops to come after them : but as a matter of historical fact they appointed the Seven, usually identified with the Order of Deacons ; and they also ordained elders or presbyters in the various churches. The Seven were originally appointed with a view to the carrying out of the ministrations of charity : but one of them, Philip, evangelising in Samaria, proceeds without question to baptize his converts. The elders or presbyters, whose function is not much described in the New Testament, have always in the Church been an order of higher dignity. It will not here be fitting to enter on the presbyterian controversy. It will be assumed that the presbyters of the first age were essentially the same with the presbyters known to later history ; an order of men who in qualification shared the competence of the Apostles for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, and for much besides, the main exception in historical practice being the right of Ordination.

In the mind of the early Church the great sacrament of Baptism was most fitly ministered by the bishop. When the bishops ministered Baptism they commonly did so at a great solemnity before Easter or Whitsunday. But any immediate necessity admitted the ministration of Baptism not only by priests but by deacons : and it came to be generally recognised that even the Christian Faithful might enterprise to act if the death of the person appeared to be imminent.

Ancient  
prayers of  
ordination.

The earliest forms of Church Order which are extant are interesting evidence of the mind of the Church in the first ages as to the transmission of the authority to bind and to loose, to remit and to retain. The *Canones Hippolyti* have in the prayer used for the consecration of a bishop :—

“Grant to him, O Lord, the episcopate and a clement spirit, and power to remit sins.”

The same form is appointed for the ordination of a presbyter, only the word for *episcopate* being altered. This form of Church Order may have been employed by Hippolytus for his schismatic community in Rome (c. A.D. 220) : and, if so, would presumably have been derived by him from forms previously in use in the Church.

The *Egyptian Church Order* has a longer and more explicit form, specifying both the forgiveness of sins and the loosing of bonds.

The bishop  
the minister  
of Penance.

The arguments of Tertullian as a Montanist against the inherence of the commission in the Episcopal Order merely as such go to



show what was the mind of the Catholic Church. He says: "The Church will, it is true, forgive sins: but it will be the Church of the Spirit, by means of spiritual men, not the church which is a number of bishops." Tertullian would find a place for the "spiritual" prophets of Montanism: but the Catholic Church was "the church which is a number of bishops." It is indeed Tertullian who in another place distinctly affirms that while the capital sins were reserved for the judgment of God, less grave offences could "obtain pardon from the bishop." Without this express statement that the bishop was the minister of pardon, the same might have been inferred as admitted in the second century from the correspondence of Dionysius of Corinth and Pinytus of Cnossus, from the action of Marcion's father the bishop of Sinope, from the place of Zephyrinus in the penance of Natalius and notably now at the beginning of the third century from the very action of Callistus against which Tertullian is violently protesting.

The attitude of Origen on this point is a remarkable instance of the influence which one powerful mind may exert upon another: for it can hardly be doubted that in his requirement of a personal spirituality as well as an official commission, Origen is following in the wake of Tertullian. But he makes that requirement. He notes that "those who claim the place of the episcopate exercise their commission like Peter, and, having taken the keys of the kingdom of heaven for the Saviour, teach that whatsoever things are bound by them, that is to say, condemned, are bound also in heaven, and that those matters which have received remission from them are loosed also in heaven." He admits the claim if the bishop is worthy, but he goes on to say that "if he is bound by the chain of his sins, it is in vain that he either binds or looses." It need hardly be remarked that the later Church has ruled that the unworthiness of ministers does not invalidate their ministrations.

With regard to the minister to whom confession of sin might be made, and who in the Latin version of Origen's *Leviticus* is called the *priest of the Lord* (*sacerdoti Domini*) it would not be evident from the Latin of Rufinus whether the term priest was or was not to include presbyters as well as bishops. But Origen goes on to quote as apposite to such penitent confession the direction of S. James, who bids the sick man to call the elders of the Church with the result that his sins are forgiven him. S. James writes of *presbyters*: and Origen may therefore be understood as recognising the absolving ministry of presbyters as well as that of bishops.

In Origen  
also the  
presbyter.

In Africa in the middle of the third century the writings of Cyprian show the bishop as hearing the confessions,<sup>1</sup> as directing the penance, and as reconciling at a solemn function, in which, however, the presbyters join him in the laying on of hands.

<sup>1</sup> In S. Cyprian the term *sacerdotes Dei* is confined to bishops.

Cyprian shows the presbyter reconciling only in emergency.

Presbyters only reconcile without the bishop in cases of emergency, as when a person is in danger of death. It is not a little remarkable that in the same circumstances of emergency S. Cyprian authorises a deacon to accord reconciliation. In the case of certain presbyters who had reconciled apostates on their own authority without any such necessity he condemns their action, and states that they had "not reserved to the bishop the honour of his episcopate and chair."

Case of Sarapion at Alexandria. Reconciliation by a priest through a messenger.

The case of Sarapion at Alexandria affords a remarkable instance of the reconciliation of a lapsed person by a priest through a messenger. The priest when summoned to the dying bed of Sarapion by the lad whom Sarapion had sent was through sickness unable to comply with the summons. But he delivered to the lad "a fragment of the Eucharist, bidding him to moisten It and to drop It into the old man's mouth." This he did, and Sarapion passed away in peace. The bishop, Dionysius, relating this history writes: "Is it not thus clear that he was preserved and that he remained till he was absolved (*ἔως λυθῆναι*), and, his sin having been wiped away, he might find recognition for the many good deeds which he had done?" In this narrative it should be noted (1) that the bishop Dionysius had given an order that reconciliation should be accorded to the dying if they asked for it; (2) that when death was imminent Sarapion sent a lad to summon any presbyter (*τῶν πρεσβυτέρων τινὰ*); (3) that the presbyter in compliance with the bishop's order accorded reconciliation; (4) that he did so by according communion; (5) that the Holy Eucharist was, in fact, conveyed and administered by the messenger lad; and (6) that the bishop in narrating the history is clear that Sarapion was absolved.

The priests penitentiary.

It was following upon the Decian persecution, if we may accept the statement of Socrates, that the important step was taken of appointing priests penitentiary. He indicates that such appointments were made in the churches generally: and this may probably have been the case within a limited area. The number of lapsed persons seeking Penance was not small, and also the avoidance of publicity may have been a definite object. But, whatsoever the cause, the appointment of priests penitentiary is a step of the first importance in the history of the ministry of Penance. Up to this time (c. A.D. 252) most of the evidence indicates that the control of Penance was directly in the hands of the bishops. So far as there is evidence it was indeed generally recognised that a priest might reconcile the dying. Origen's statement about the ministers to whom confession might be made in time of health probably includes priests. Otherwise it is the bishop who is seen to bind and to loose. Now by the appointment of priests penitentiary, at least in the Eastern churches which employed them, a priest is empowered to hear the confessions of penitents,



to assign their penances, and to accord absolution. It would seem, too, that all this took place without publicity so that these Eastern churches had reached a stage which was not reached in the West till further centuries had passed. It is probable that priests penitentiary received appointment in different churches at somewhat various times and with some local variations of use. The two churches which in this investigation have illustrated the twenty years following the Decian persecution, that is to say, the church of Neo-Cæsarea in Pontus, and the church of the *Didascalia* in Syria, show only the bishop as in serious authority. At the later period when the priest penitentiary comes into evidence at Constantinople, the period closing the fourth century, he is not equally in evidence in the churches of the Asian provinces or at Antioch. In the Asian provinces, so far as appears, it is still the bishop who controls: though S. Gregory of Nyssa refers to confessions made to a priest (*ιερεί*), where it is probable that the word *ιερεί* at least includes a presbyter. At Antioch the absolving power of the priesthood finds full recognition from S. Chrysostom, but without any indication of restriction to an official penitentiary.

In Pontus and in Syria only the bishop.

In the Asian provinces chiefly the bishop. At Antioch the ministry of priests not confined to a penitentiary.

The knowledge which we have of the priests penitentiary is almost entirely derived from the narratives furnished by Socrates and Sozomen of the scandalous incident which led to the abolition of the office at Constantinople. But at Rome at the beginning of the fourth century Marcellus had appointed twenty-five priests of *titles*: and this action may be understood as part of the same general movement towards broadening the ministry of Penance. At Rome, however, there were important differences. Whereas in the East the office of priest penitentiary brought with it the privacy of penance and the privacy of an absolution accorded by the priest; at Rome the penance was at least in part public before the Church, and the absolution was given, not by the priest, but by the bishop, in a public and solemn function.

At Rome the priests of titles;

but absolution by the bishop.

This variety of practice, and of the ministry of absolution, continued to distinguish East and West for centuries to come. The Roman system, in which absolution was accorded by the bishop except in cases of sickness or other extreme emergency, is found in force with little variation in the churches of Milan, of Africa, of Spain, and of Gaul. In the East it would appear that the priests were accorded more freedom to act in absolution without such control on the part of the bishop.

Various practice of East and West.

In considering the ministry of Penance notice may be taken of the prominence assumed for a time by the claim of the martyrs or confessors to extend the reconciliation of the Church to Christians who had lapsed. It was a claim which impinged upon and even challenged the commission of the bishops. On one point, indeed, the Church was unanimous that martyrdom was efficacious. For the souls of the martyrs themselves all would surely be well.

The claim of the martyrs.

Even though they were Christians who had lapsed, their later testimony in their blood removed the stain and restored them before the Lord. Even if they were not baptized at all, the blood of the martyr would become a sufficient sacrament, and in it all sin and defilement would be washed away. The strictest of the Christian teachers were clear about this. Even Origen, even Tertullian, have here no variant voice.

But the claim made on behalf of the martyrs or confessors that they could extend the reconciliation of the Church to lapsed persons other than themselves was an entirely different matter. There had, indeed, been some tradition that the merciful intervention of the confessors might be admitted on behalf of others. It appears to have been so understood at the time of the persecution at Lyons in the second century (A.D. 177). The martyrs of the church of Lyons were then allowed to obtain for some who had failed a fresh opportunity of standing within the enclosure of the Church. Tertullian again in the *Ad Martyres* speaks of those who supplicated for the peace of the Church from the martyrs in prison. And from the *De Pudicitia* of Tertullian it appears that Callistus admitted the intervention of martyrs for persons guilty of fleshly offence. But it was in Africa in the time of Cyprian that the assumption of confessors to reconcile the lapsed became clamorous and insistent. In the letter of the confessor Lucian and others which has been cited in its place this assumption, in fact, requires the bishop to reconcile all lapsed persons whose conduct since their lapse could find approval. It is clear that this is a claim to override and control the bishop's function of binding and loosing: and it had to be fairly faced and dealt with. In view of the clamour which assailed him on all sides S. Cyprian announced that he would take no final action without a council. He could point to some grave inconveniences in too general an admission of this privilege of martyrdom. It was clearly necessary that if admitted at all it must have definite application to particular lapsed persons indicated by name. Also it could not be overlooked that some of the Christians who had confessed Christ under persecution had subsequently given scandal by sinful courses. It is not, however, Cyprian who most opposes the recognition of some prerogative in the martyrs. His proposal in A.D. 250 was that lapsed persons should be reconciled before death if they had a *libellus* from a martyr; thus making the *libellus* of a martyr a required condition of that extension of reconciliatory power, which was made by the bishop's authority. This proposal was, however, brushed aside by the council which met at Carthage in A.D. 251.<sup>1</sup> No letters of martyrs were wanted, nor was there need to ask for them. The bishop could authorise reconciliation when death was in sight; and in cases of minor gravity after the accomplishment of a term of penance.

<sup>1</sup> First Council of Carthage under Cyprian.



A remarkable feature in the controversy regarding the claims of the martyrs is that those claims were never menacing outside the limits of the African churches. In Rome the right of the confessors to intervene for the lapsed was never admitted. It appears that after the Decian persecution the Roman confessors did make certain petitions on behalf of the lapsed; but in the letter of the Roman clergy drafted by Novatian it is stated that these Roman confessors had "revoked their unlawful petitions that they might not be a shame to the Church."

Nowhere menacing except in Africa.

The claim of the confessors did not, in fact, attain to serious proportions outside the African province; nor there when once the incidents of the Decian persecution had passed into history. In the fourth century it was already a forgotten chapter of Church experience.

Inquiry may now be made as to what outward sign or expression is found to accompany the exercise of absolution in the first four and a half centuries of the Christian Church. First may be noted the evidence as to the laying on of hands which found widespread use for absolution in the churches of the West, and which was also thus employed at least in some Eastern churches. In the second place reference may be made to verbal expressions of absolution in the form of prayer. The possibility of verbal pronouncements in declaratory form may be noticed in the third place. And, fourthly, there are the instances of absolution in which the admission to communion constituted the whole outward indication.

Outward sign or expression of absolution.

The laying on of hands as the outward sign of absolution is an impressive feature of the procedure of Penance in the church of Carthage in the time of S. Cyprian (A.D. 250). When the course of public penance was duly accomplished the bishop and clergy laid their hands upon the penitent in a public and solemn function. As throughout the West it is the bishop who under normal circumstances is the minister of absolution: but at Carthage the other clergy also are associated with him in the solemn laying on of hands. S. Cyprian's instructions for the reconciliation of sick penitents authorised the laying on of hands by a priest without waiting for the presence of the bishop. If even a priest could not be found a deacon, as has been seen, might convey the absolution, and he, too, was empowered in such case to lay on his hand.

Laying on of hands in use at Carthage under Cyprian.

In the African church of a later period it appears from Canon 43 of the *Codex Canonum Ecclesiæ Africanæ* that the public absolution for grave sin was accorded by the laying on of hands in front of the apse of the church. In the *Statuta Ecclesiæ Antiqua* the canons numbered 76 and 78, which appear to be taken from the proceedings of different councils, give variant instructions with regard to the use of the laying on of hands in the absolution of the sick. According to Canon 76 a sick penitent is to be reconciled

Imposition of hands in front of the apse in the later African church.

Usage in  
sick cases.

with the laying on of hands. According to Canon 78 he may be allowed to receive the Viaticum, but the hand is not to be laid upon him. If after being thus admitted to communion he should recover, he is not to regard himself as absolved until he has received the imposition of hands on the fulfilment of his penance. The same rule is adopted in southern Gaul by the First Council of Orange (A.D. 441).

There were  
also im-  
positions  
of hand  
other than  
those for  
absolution.

All the instances of laying on of hands so far referred to are certainly for absolution. But the inquiry as regards the laying on of hands in connexion with penance is rendered difficult by the fact that there were at least two different impositions of the hand employed in the penitential usage of the Church. Besides the imposition for absolution, which is styled by the First Council of Orange (A.D. 441) "the reconciliatory imposition of the hand," there was in use another imposition of the hand which found repeated use during the term of penance, and which did not end the penance, or reconcile the penitent. This imposition was rather a formal recognition in the course of the solemn Liturgy that the penitent was in the eyes of the Church a brother; a brother under discipline indeed, but still a brother, capable of receiving a blessing, and on his way to restoration. An interesting description of the ceremony is found in the nineteenth canon of the Council of Laodicea (*bet.* A.D. 344 and A.D. 363). After the departure of the catechumens at the end of the first portion of the Liturgy, prayer is to be made for the penitents, who then come up "under the hand," and after receiving this act of recognition or benediction, leave the church in their turn, the faithful remaining for the rest of the Liturgy.

In the face of these two quite distinct uses of the imposition of hands it becomes necessary when mention is made of any act of imposition upon penitents to question the context as to whether the intention of the act is reconciliation or merely present recognition without reconciliation. Thus when S. Leo, writing to Nicetas of Aquileia (*c.* A.D. 450) says of persons who had allowed themselves to be rebaptized by heretics that they are only to be received into communion "by the remedy of penitence, and by the imposition of the episcopal hand," the imposition of hands might be of either sort. It appears, however, to be understood that it effects the reconciliation which admits to communion. Again, when Rusticus of Narbonne asks S. Leo whether if a priest or deacon asks for Penance it should or should not be given him by the imposition of hands, and when S. Leo in reply sanctions private penitential withdrawal in the case of the clergy without any such public imposition of hands, what is to be understood as to the character of such imposition? It might be for absolution: and it might be for recognition in the public liturgical worship during the course of penance. But in this case the form alike of the question and of the answer would rather seem to



indicate that the laying on of hands would be for the purpose of effecting *admission to the status of the penitent*. And with this third intention of the act of imposition would seem to agree the narrative of the administration of penance in southern Gaul by S. Hilary of Arles (c. A.D. 440) which included (1) an admonition, (2) supplications, and (3) the laying on of hands, where the laying on of hands appears to have been neither for absolution nor for the ceremony in the Liturgy.

S. Ambrose, in a passage of the *De Pœnitentia*, accuses the Novatianists of Milan of inconsistency in rejecting human ministrations in the Penance of the Church, whereas they admit such human ministrations in Baptism, and in a laying on of hands for the sick. "Why, then, do ye lay hands, and believe it to be a work of blessing, if any sick man is found to recover?" It would thus appear that the Novatianists employed imposition of hands for the gravely sick, probably in connexion with the instruction of S. James. As S. Ambrose has no condemnation for this practice, it may presumably also have been the practice of the Catholic body in Milan. Whether the Novatianists employed it for persons whom they would not admit to communion does not appear. This laying on of hands may perhaps be best understood as accorded with a view to obtaining the benefits promised by S. James: "the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him." Obviously such persons might be in full communion and have little in common with the technical penitent. Obviously also the forgiveness of sins might be an urgent need, and in such case the laying on of hands would tend to have the character of absolution.

Thus there may be discriminated in the early centuries certainly two and perhaps not less than four different employments of the laying on of hands in connexion with the forgiveness of sin, besides the other acts of imposition familiar in the Church in Confirmation, in Ordination, and in various forms of benediction.

The inquiry may now revert to the evidence for the laying on of hands as an outward sign of absolution. In the Syrian church of the *Didascalia* (A.D. 252-270) the instructions to the bishop appear to include a laying on of hands for absolution. The instruction in the seventh chapter might be for absolution, or it might be only for admission to Penance: "When a sinner repents and weeps, receive him; and when the people have prayed for him lay (thy hands) upon him, and allow him thenceforth to be in the Church." In the tenth chapter the laying on of hands seems to carry absolution: "As therefore thou baptizest a heathen, and thereafter receivest him, so on that man also lay the hand, every one praying for him: thereafter bring him in and let him partake with the Church." Again in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, reproducing the *Didascalia*: "Having laid thy hand upon him, permit him henceforth to be in the flock."

The laying  
on of hands  
in Syria,

but not at  
Antioch,

or at Con-  
stantinople.

Western  
practice.

Africa and  
Gaul.

Roman  
usage  
obscure.

Thus in the Syrian church represented by the *Didascalia* the laying on of hands would appear to have been used for absolution or reconciliation. The same may have been the case in the churches in which at a later date the *Apostolic Constitutions* were compiled, although the compilation does not necessarily involve this. But no other evidence is forthcoming of the use of the laying on of hands for absolution in the churches of the East. In the churches of the Asian provinces, while there was an elaborate ceremonial for the imposition of hands upon penitents in the course of the Liturgy, there is no indication of the use of the laying on of hands, or of any other outward symbol or expression for the purpose of effecting reconciliation. In the great church of Antioch in the time of S. Chrysostom there is apparently no such usage. At least in the studies here made of the writings of S. Chrysostom no reference has been found to the laying on of hands as employed either for public or for private reconciliation. Nor is any mention made of the laying on of hands in the narratives of the absolution given by the priest penitentiary at Constantinople.

In the West, as has been seen, the African churches employed the laying on of hands for absolution in a public and solemn function alike in the times of S. Cyprian and in those of S. Augustine. In southern Gaul the First Council of Orange knows of a "reconciliatory imposition of the hand" which should be given in a public function after the fulfilment of penance to a penitent who had already been admitted to communion in time of sickness.

The usage of Rome in this matter is not easily determined. There is repeated evidence of some imposition of hands for penitents generally; and also repeated evidence of the employment of imposition of hands in the reconciliation of heretics: but there is no mention anywhere of the imposition of hands as used in the public and solemn reconciliation of ordinary penitents by the bishop on the Thursday before Easter. When Innocent I., writing to Alexander of Antioch, says that he has received Arians and other heretics by the laying on of hands "after the pattern of Penance," it appears to be clear that this ceremony for heretics corresponded to some ceremony employed for penitents generally. When Leo the Great writes to Rusticus of Narbonne that it is not according to custom that priests and deacons should "receive the remedy of Penance by the laying on of hands," it appears to be meant that others would so receive it. Again, it appears to be clear that alike at Rome, and in large tracts of the Christian acceptance elsewhere heretics were actually reconciled by the laying on of hands, which was, in fact, at once their admission to Penance, the witness they afforded of the acceptance of such Penance, and their release from the yoke of it. Thus the Nicene council (c. 8) indicates that the Cathari or Novatianists were so reconciled. Thus Innocent I., as already quoted in his letter to Alexander of Antioch concerning the reconciliation of Arians and others. Thus Leo to Nicetas of Aquileia, that the rebaptized



were not to be received, "except by the remedy of penance, and by the imposition of the episcopal hand"; and Leo again to Rusticus of Narbonne that persons baptized in infancy and afterwards taken captive, if their lapse had not extended beyond partaking of idolatrous banquets, might be "purged by fast and the imposition of the hand." Thus too in Africa, S. Augustine in the *De Baptismo contra Donatistas* says that if in receiving heretics the hand be not laid on them, they would seem to be free from fault: and S. Optatus makes it a charge against the Donatists that they, treating the Catholics as heretics, made all who became Donatists submit to the laying on of hands, whether clergy or lay-people.

It was then the common practice, certainly at Rome, and certainly also in some other churches, to reconcile heretics by the laying on of hands. But the significance of this laying on of hands may be that it was employed "after the pattern of Penance" for admission to the state of Penance, and that in the case of a heretic nothing more was demanded for entire reconciliation. It does not necessarily mean that the laying on of hands was ordinarily employed in the reconciliation of all penitents: though the evidence may not entitle the student to deny the possibility of this. The student may, however, reasonably expect that if the laying on of hands was employed in the solemn reconciliation of penitents by the bishop on Maundy Thursday some of the accounts would contain an indication of it. There is no such indication in the narrative of the penance and restoration of Fabiola, in the *Order for Reconciliation* of the Gelasian Sacramentary, or in the description of the function which is given by Sozomen. The laying on of hands mentioned by S. Jerome in his *Dialogue against the Luciferians* may best be understood not of the final reconciliation, but of an earlier stage of penance.

On the question of the employment of the laying on of hands in absolution in the Church generally the evidence which has been cited may be found sufficient to show that there was considerable such use in the West; and that the laying on of hands was also so employed in the Syrian churches represented by the *Didascalia* and by the *Apostolic Constitutions*; but that the use was by no means universal.

The laying on of hands in absolution found considerable use, but was not universal.

The verbal expression of absolution or reconciliation was in the early centuries usually made in the form of prayer. No verbal absolution in any form but that of prayer is known to have been preserved. The reconciliatory prayers employed at Rome are given in the *Gelasian Sacramentary* and have in these studies been printed in their place. A few references to such prayer at Rome may suffice. In S. Jerome's *Dialogue against the Luciferians* it is stated that a bishop reconciles a person to the altar, "a prayer being pronounced before the people (*indicta in populum oratione*)."

Verbal expression usually made in form of prayer.

S. Leo to the bishops of Campania, Samnium, and Picenum describes the confession which he approves as "the confession which is first offered to God, but then also to

the priest, who approaches as a suppliant (*precator accedit*) for the sins of penitents." To Theodore of Forum Julii S. Leo writes that "the pardon of God cannot be obtained save by the supplications of the priests"; and again that "it is in a high degree useful and necessary that the guilt of sinners be absolved by priestly supplication before the last day."

In Africa S. Optatus twits the Donatists with the fact that in reconciling Catholics by the laying on of hands they were unable to avoid turning to the altar and saying the Lord's Prayer. It may be understood that this was the general practice in Africa.

In the Eastern churches the supplicatory forms of absolution have been retained to modern times. Goar in his *Euchologion*<sup>1</sup> gives such a form headed "A prayer when a person is freed from the penance imposed," with other prayers of reconciliation for special circumstances.<sup>2</sup>

Possible  
use of  
indicative  
forms.

No indicative form of absolution, as *Ego te absolvo*, is known to come down from the early centuries. It cannot, however, be certainly affirmed that no such form was ever used. S. Ambrose in the *De Spiritu Sancto* writes, "For neither do they remit sins in their own name, but in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. They ask, the Godhead grants; the service is human, but the munificence is of supernal power." The asking is the *prayer* of remission: but if the clergy remitted sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, it is difficult to see how this could be done except in some form of direct pronouncement.<sup>3</sup> The description given by S. Ambrose would apply exactly to the composite forms of absolution, half prayer and half pronouncement, which have been generally used since the first half of the thirteenth century, and of which the English form in the Prayer Book *Order for the Visitation of the Sick* is an excellent example:—

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences: And by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

In this form of absolution, the first part is a prayer of absolution, the second a direct pronouncement of it.

Precatory  
forms in  
general  
use till the  
thirteenth  
century.

S. Thomas Aquinas in his twenty-second *Opusculum*, a short treatise addressed to the Master General of the Dominicans on the subject of the form of absolution, in which he defends and indeed requires the indicative form, mentions the statement made by some of those with whom he is arguing, that only thirty years had passed since all used the precatory form beginning *Absolu-*

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Paris, A.D. 1647, p. 666.

<sup>2</sup> Composite forms are also employed.

<sup>3</sup> Such form of pronouncement might be in the passive, as in the Eastern formula of marriage: "The servant of God is crowned."



*tionem et remissionem*.<sup>1</sup> S. Thomas does not deny this, but merely notes that none could speak for all. It may be understood that precatory forms were in general use in Western Europe till somewhere about the middle of the thirteenth century. The wide introduction of composite forms of absolution may not be earlier than this; but it is always possible that such forms may have their roots in antiquity.

It was not in every case that any formal expression of absolution found place before the admission of the person to communion. And this is true even of cases of penance inflicted for capital sins. Thus in the case of Sarapion in Egypt it is clear from the narrative of Dionysius that the presbyter having decided to accord reconciliation to Sarapion before death as ordered in such cases by the bishop, who was Dionysius himself, the messenger lad was entrusted with the Viaticum, and that he conveyed it to Sarapion, who thereupon proceeded to make his communion. Sarapion had been kept alive, says the bishop, till he was absolved (ἔως λυθῆναι). How was the absolution conveyed? Certainly not by imposition of hands, or by a prayer of reconciliation said over him by the priest, or by any pronouncement of absolution in his presence. The circumstances narrated by Dionysius preclude even the possibility of any of these forms of procedure. Sarapion's case was the extreme case of a lapsed person, who had been bound, held up, debarred from communion till death should be imminent. When at last he was loosed or absolved, the procedure was to admit him to communion. There was in his case no other procedure of absolution.

Admission  
to com-  
munion  
not always  
preceded by  
formal  
absolution.

Again, when in the thirteenth canon of the Nicene council it is ruled that on the approach of death all persons in penance may be admitted to communion, but that if they recover they are only to have the communion of the Prayer, that is to say, to take their place among the Bystanders; it may be expected that no formal absolution preceded the Viaticum. The same may be expected in those Western cases of death-bed communion, where the laying on of hands was held to be inadmissible.

Nor is it only in cases of dying persons that the evidence indicates in certain quarters the absence of any formal expression of absolution. In the churches of the Asian provinces which employed the graded system of penance in the fourth century the penances were in a high degree severe and prolonged, and were entirely definite in their incidence; but when at last the term of the penance in the final grade was reached, the person was to "proceed to communion," to "partake of the Sacred Things," to undertake "the communion of the Good." There is no indication in the canons of the Asian councils, or in those of S. Basil, or in the instructions of S. Gregory of Nyssa that anything at

<sup>1</sup> *D. Thomæ Aquinatis Doctoris Angelici Opuscula omnia*: Venetiis, 1687, p. 343.

all in the way of formal absolution found place between the fulfilment of the penance and the admission to communion. It cannot be certainly affirmed that no prayer of reconciliation was employed. But the impression conveyed is that when the person had fulfilled the penance he simply stood no longer bound. Communion was open to him : and he proceeded to make his communion. The same will be noted later on as apparently the system of the Irish monasteries in the sixth century.

The suggestion has been made that absolution may have been formally given at some point other than the close of the penitential observance ; as, for instance, on the admission of the persons to the grade of Bystanders: but of this there is no evidence.

But the Holy Eucharist was never the actual means of absolution.

It should, however, be borne in mind that in every such case of accepted penance in the Asian churches it is to be presumed (1) that the bishop or priest had before assigning the penance received from the offending person either a voluntary confession or an acknowledgment of charge ; (2) that the penance was indicated as regards the grades of penance, and the duration in each grade, with entire definiteness, such penance being the condition, the final accomplishment of which would bring reconciliation ; (3) that this action of the priest is not widely different in principle from the conditional absolution of a modern penitent conveyed before the undertaking of the penance ; and (4) that it may have been, and probably was, accompanied by prayers which in the light of these facts attain the character of precatory absolutions.

Even these considerations will not be found applicable to all cases where a formal absolution does not appear to have been given : and it has to be stated definitely that on occasion no other procedure of absolution found place than the actual admission to communion.

It should, however, be stated with all clearness that nowhere and at no time in the history of the Church has the Holy Eucharist been regarded as the actual means of Absolution. It was not open to any person whose penitence was as yet insufficient, and who was not yet absolved before God, to approach communion in order that the Holy Eucharist coming into touch with the unabsolved sinner might thereby absolve him. Of the cleansing power of the Eucharist to wash the forgiven sinner " more and more " ; of the yearning that so " our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body, and our souls washed through His most precious Blood " ; the Church is ever conscious. For the unreconciled is the warning that " the danger is great if we receive the same unworthily. For then we are guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ our Saviour : we eat and drink our own damnation, not considering the Lord's Body."





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